

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

APRIL, 1910

15 CENTS



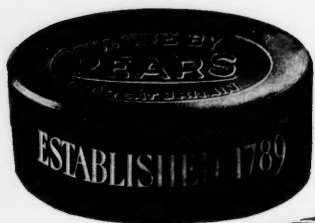
DRAWN BY
HOWARD B.
SPENCER

Short Stories
Articles and Poems

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Portraits Stage Favorites

CONTRIBUTORS—MARY HEATON VORSE, ANNE O'HAGAN, HOLMAN F. DAY

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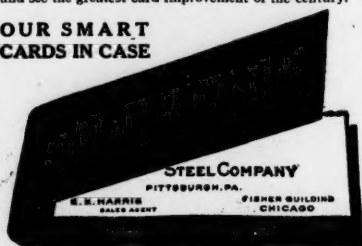
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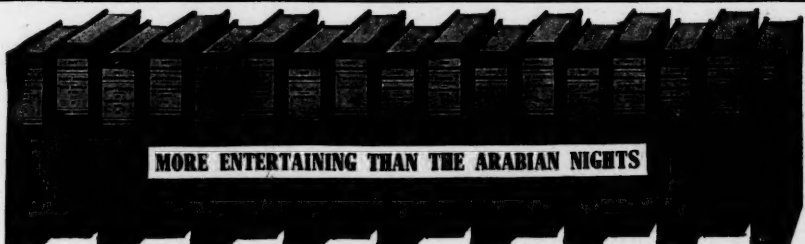
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Vol. XI

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 1

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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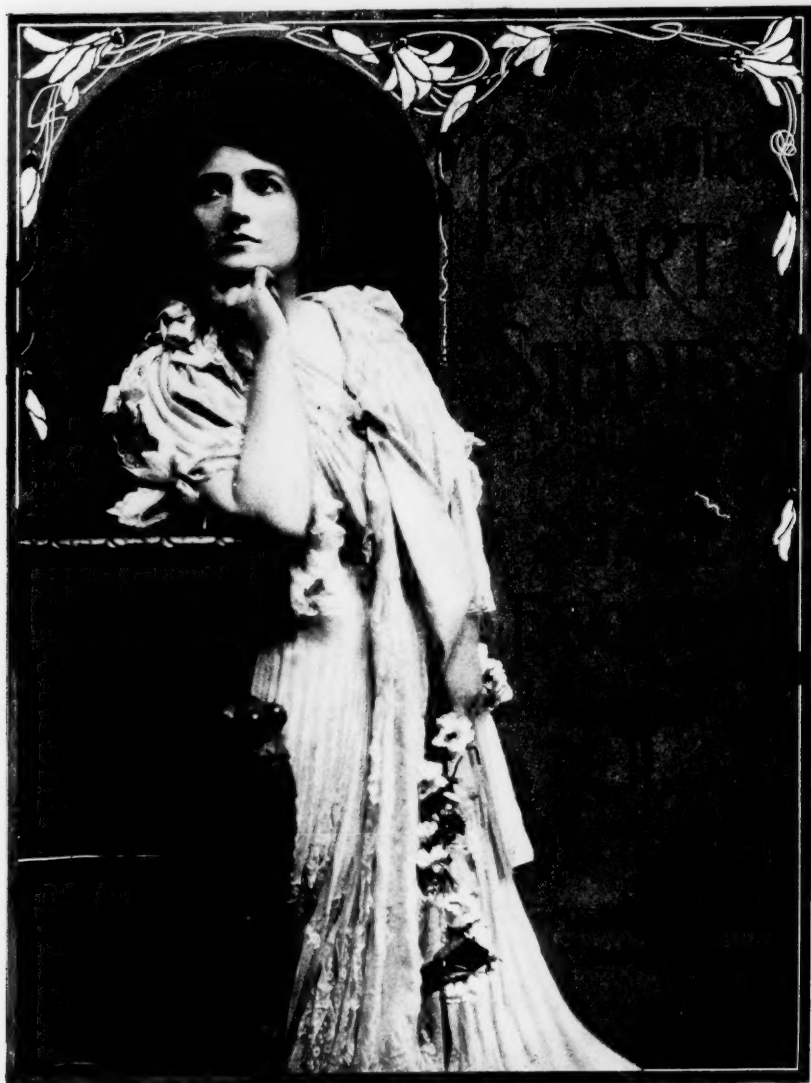
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MISS NANCY ROSE
In "The Rose of Algeria"

Photo by Winter, N. Y.



Photo by Garraway Studio, N. Y.





Photo by White, N. Y.



MISS MARION WHITNEY
In "Old Dutch"

Photo by White, N. Y.



MISS EDNA DODSWORTH
In "Old Dutch"

Photo by White, N. Y.



MISS NELLIE MCCOY
In "The Silver Star"

Photo by Stanley Co., N. Y.



MISS MILLER
Of the Marvelous Millers in
"The Midnight Sons"

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MISS MARGARET ANGLIN
Starring in "The Awakening
of Helena Richie"

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In "Seven Days"

Photo by White, N. Y.



MISS GEORGIA O'RAMEY
In "Seven Days"

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MISS RUBY LEWIS
With "Miss Innocence"

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MISS VALESKA SURATT
In Vaudeville

Photo by Garraway Studio, N. Y.



ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

CHAPTER I.

IT was Lester Hilton who met his sister Rose at the pier and gossiped with her concerning family affairs, while the customs officials scrutinized her boxes and trunks. The fact that a ceremony, in which the entire family was accustomed to join, should be performed by only one member of it evidently gave Lady Hawthornden some concern, for she found herself saying, for the fifth time, after she had thanked an inspector who told her that her baggage was all properly labeled for removal:

"Are you sure that the others are well, Les? Amy isn't—sick or anything? Or Ned?"

Lester laughed down at her from a comfortable distance above her own slim height—the Hiltons were all tall and slender, with a graceful soldierliness of carriage.

"All well, your ladyship," he informed her. "But you must remember that it is the dawn's early light by

which you are entering our harbor. Amy stayed in town yesterday until it was sure that you were not going to dock until early this morning. Then she went out to Oakdale with Ned."

"Dear old Ned!" interrupted Ned's sister appreciatively.

"Yes. Same Ned. And they'll both wait breakfast until we arrive."

"Are the morning trains as bad as ever?"

"Rose, aren't you ever going to recover from the effects of early poverty? What do I know of early morning trains? What do you care for them? Hasn't it penetrated your mind yet that I've got the best machine manufactured, and the most guaranteed chauffeur?"

"I forget," Rose replied, with a giggle and a pressure of his arm, as they walked down the dock. "I always forget. You see, I didn't stay home long enough to share in the general prosperity, and all my remembrances are of poor Amy's trying to make over dresses for me out of stuff in grand-

mother's trunks—like girls in a story. But our grandmother was a thoughtless creature, and she had all her clothes cut in so many gores and biases that they didn't make over worth a cent."

"You're as hopelessly American as ever, aren't you?" said Lester, tucking a robe about her, and looking with brotherly pride and affection at the picture she made as she settled luxuriously back in the car.

"It seems to be the way Eric likes me," she apologized.

"Sensible man, your husband. Is he coming over after you?"

"Yes. He'll be able to get away in a month. Then we'll have a month of it together—and then back. This is a nice car, Lester! We're still going about Hawthorn Abbey in an antiquated surrey. We'll never be able to afford any modern conveniences. Repairs and the cottages and the inheritance tax just beggar us. Sometimes I think what an awful pity it was that Clarence died; Eric would have been sure to get on in mining, wouldn't he? But to have to give it all up, and go home to take up the responsibility of his ruined acres—it was a shame!"

"Oh, come now, missy, no pretending! You know you like being 'my lady,' and all the rest of it."

"Oh, I'm a true American," answered Rose, by way of admitting the charge. "But, really, we are poor as church mice. And, if you will recall, my dear young inventor, that I was married out of a household poorer than even church mice, you won't be amazed at my asking you about trains on the S. D. and P. instead of about your motors. How we have prospered, Lester—we Hiltons, I mean!" she added.

"We have, thank God!" There was something sharp and determined in the young man's voice. Rose looked at him with startled curiosity.

"Why do you say that? I never suspected you of caring much about money. And I'm sure we were always happy, even before Ned—dear, old Ned—discovered the blessed mine, and you made your wonderful signal device. Why do you thank God for riches?"

"Because they enable one to purchase such pleasant little luxuries; trips across the water to see one's titled sister on her children's ancestral estates, motor cars to carry her whizzing out to Oakdale when she comes home on a visit, lollipops for one's aristocratic nephews—even a little matter of revenge, if one happens to want it!"

"Revenge, you absurd infant? Have you a choice collection of enemies?"

"No—only one very rare specimen."

"Why, Lester!" cried his sister, turning to gaze at him with a more serious interest than she had yet shown. "I honestly believe you're in earnest!"

The young man beside her returned her stare, but she found only mirth in the blue eyes that shone out of his tanned face. She gave up her scrutiny a little doubtfully.

"Of course, you're only joking," she remarked. "But it was a nasty sort of joke—revenge! I shouldn't care to have you down on me, Lester. You've such a jaw!"

"I'll grow a mitigating beard if it's too formidable," answered the young man. The severe lines of his beardless face were softened as he smiled affectionately upon the pretty young woman. The brilliancy of his laughing eyes, the sense of pleasant alertness that was conveyed by his whole presence, the kindly line of his lips in smiling—all these seemed a guarantee against any strength of dark resolution such as his tone in regard to revenge had suggested. Rose beamed lovingly upon him.

"You never seem to become rich enough to have a new house among your luxuries?" she said.

"You can see Amy living in any other house in Oakdale, can't you?" scoffed Lester.

"Or any of the rest of you, for that matter," agreed Rose. "No other place would be home, of course. Does she still have her vegetable garden, Lester? And the line of currant bushes—what jelly she used to make! And the——"

"She has them all, and a little hot-house to boot. That is the only extravagance about the 'estate.' She had

that built last fall after she had come back from a visit to Hawthorn Abbey."

"She was crazy about the hothouses and conservatories," Rose recalled. "Dear, dearest Amy!" Then she sighed. "Lester," she added, "isn't she ever going to marry? Isn't Amy ever going to marry?"

The hardening of Lester's mobile features, the throbbing of a vein in his temple, the lighting of a spark in his blue eyes, all answered Rose after some fashion before he spoke. When he did, it was only to say:

"There doesn't seem to be much doing in that line. I've an idea she sent Hackett to the rightabout last June at commencement."

"I know that she refused Edwin Cumscurt," sighed Lady Hawthornden. "And he is such a nice fellow—with some money and no devouring old place to eat it all up. He's the younger son of a younger son who married an Australian heiress, which was nice for him financially. And he's a member of the government this year. He was head over heels in love with her. Lester, you don't think that she still cares anything about that—that beast?"

She lowered her voice as she spoke. A wave of crimson dyed her smooth, oval face, as though she blushed at what she recalled. Her brother shook his head frowningly.

"No, I'm sure she doesn't. She meets them sometimes—him and his wife—and it doesn't faze her in the least. No, it isn't that. But sometimes I've felt that that—episode—killed something in her; that maybe she can't ever love again?" He spoke the last words questioningly, as though he sought from his sister's wider acquaintance with the emotions some reassurance.

"That would be too cruel!" cried Rose. "Besides—oh, it's a romantic, idiotic supposition, and I wish you hadn't made it. Because"—with a sudden sincerity—"that sometimes seems to me the only explanation of her whole attitude. And, oh, I don't want the belief strengthened. She certainly isn't in love with him any longer. Yet,

some of the most attractive and desirable men in England and America have failed to make the faintest impression—of that kind—upon her. And, Lester, Rose is twenty-eight!"

"I know it. It's just eight years since it happened."

Something in his voice made her look at him sharply, but he was staring straight ahead and she could read nothing from his clear-cut profile.

They had crossed the river by the ferry, too absorbed in their talk of Rose to make the customary tourist observation about the skyscrapers in the lower part of the city; they had spun out over the meadows, and through a suburb or two, and they were now climbing toward the hills. Rose began to gaze about her for landmarks and for changes. The town hall in Orange Corners had burned, some one had built a French chateau on the top of a treeless hill beyond Clairmount, a factory was blackening the air of what used to be Prenney's Woods, a golf course with its clubhouse stood on the site where she had been wont to go wild strawberrying fifteen years ago. She was full of recognitions and exclamations as the car climbed toward Oakdale.

"What a lot of changes for five years!" she cried. "Five years, Les! It doesn't seem so long, does it? That's because you have all been able to come to see me every year. But—what on earth is that on Mrs. Murphy's hill, where I used to go surreptitiously to play with the nice, dirty little Murphys, whom I regarded as much superior to us, because they kept pigs and we didn't? What is it?"

"As you can see, my dear sister, it is a half-timbered house of Elizabethan style, surrounded by Italian gardens, tennis courts, garages, stables, service courts, and the other paraphernalia of a modern country place."

"But the trees—Mrs. Murphy's was 'Bald-Head Hill.'"

"You can, if you have the price, have century-old oaks set up before your two-month-old place nowadays, by modern methods."

"Whose is it?"

Again there was that swift, indefinable hardening of the keen, young face.

"That is the Rickerts' new country place," he replied. And his sister turned wide, frightened eyes upon him.

"They came here—here—to build, after—everything?"

"Why not? You take these things too seriously, Rose. The mere fact that the woman whom Arthur Rickert notoriously jilted ten years ago has Oakdale for her home is no reason why he, seeking profitable real-estate investment and a popular wealthy neighborhood, shouldn't buy and build next door to her, if he chose! But he hasn't chosen to do quite that. Mrs. Murphy's old place is nearly half a mile east of the town, and we are nearly half a mile west."

"Shameless, cruel!" Rose was murmuring. "The only decent thing I ever knew of the elder Rickerts' doing was closing their hideous old place after—after Arthur threw Amy over so—and leaving the neighborhood. And now—Lester, how does she take it? How does Amy take it?"

"I've already told you, sis, that she never gives a sign. She meets them occasionally, and her manner is exactly what it is to other acquaintances. As for me," he added, with a half laugh, whose meaning was not clear to Lady Hawthornden, "I'm getting to be rather intimate with him in a business way. He's my broker, or rather his firm is my brokerage firm. Crothers and Rickert!" He laughed again.

"Think of your having a broker!" his sister scoffed. "But I do think you might have had family pride enough not to employ that wretch. However, perhaps it hurts him more to have to serve you, to realize that we're prospering—ah, Les, the dear old place!"

Her eyes dwelt tenderly upon the group of college buildings, showing gray behind the delicate green tracery of their spring trees and vines. They were grouped on two acres at the western edge of the pretty suburban city, whose only renown they had been a

quarter of a century ago, before the neighboring hills had blossomed with country seats like mushrooms in a pasture, and a large part of fashionable and almost-fashionable New York had decided that a "place" for autumn and spring and winter week-ends at Oakdale was a desirable appendage. The Hiltons belonged to the older days, when the scientific school at which their father had taught engineering had been the town's glory, and not the lists of guests at this place or at that.

"Pretty nice place," agreed Lester, as they lost it in turning a corner. In another minute, it seemed, they had swung before the piazza of an old stone and frame house, a rambling structure of many additions to the original old Dutch stone building. And on the piazza, with a face that was more welcoming than wide-stretched arms would have been, stood Amy—Amy, radiant with gladness, radiant with love, the pale beauty of her face illuminated like a crystal globe behind which shines a light. Ned, Rose's twin brother, stood in the door behind his sister, as though not to diminish Amy's rapture in the meeting by grasping at his share in it. But after one long, delighted look into Rose's face, Amy turned and pulled him out of his retirement.

"Oh, children!" she cried, in the old words that she had used when she had mothered and fathered the orphaned brood. "Isn't it too good to be true?"

CHAPTER II.

Where Mrs. Murphy's remuneration chicken house had stood in the old days, there was now a curved bed of early irises, blooming in all their slim, straight pomp. Behind them, taller shrubs grew until finally a hedge of blue spruce shut out the world to the west. Before them a curved marble basin caught the spray from a fountain where laughing Nereids forever blew opalescent bubbles, and around the basin ran a low marble seat. If Mrs. Murphy had been admitted to her once familiar precincts, she would have been stricken speechless with astonishment.



"Miss Hilton, do take pity on a distraught wife; lancee with my husband."

Water upon that dry hilltop—water for a fountain? Green hedges and lilies where all had been dry and dusty? Terraces falling in a gentle series from the great house toward this green retreat and then on toward a rose garden, where of old there had been but the precipitous fall of one hill? Mrs. Murphy had esteemed the situation as being advantageous for hens on account of the ease with which they could obtain dust baths. And now behold it—cool and green and full of delicious, moist odors! Mrs. Murphy had much

to learn of the daring of the modern landscape architect, who would not hesitate to take the contract for turning the Sahara into an English garden, in these days of money miracles in the horticultural field.

On the June day when Rose Hawthorn had come home for her first visit since her marriage, Barbara Rickert sat upon the marble seat beside her fountain and made tea—or rather served tea—for a tall, broad, blond gentleman who paid her compliments on her house, on her grounds, on her

dogs, one of whom lay, shining and dark, upon the long skirt of her pink gown, upon her gown, her hair, her wit, and her charm. It was the sort of talk to which Barbara loved to listen. That it was delivered in the exquisite English of the educated and traveled foreigner, and with the faint accent which lends such English an added charm, increased her pleasure in it all.

What Halmer Svenson, of the Swedish legation, was saying to Mrs. Arthur Rickert was strictly true. The place which she had built—her husband was held to be too busy with money-market matters to do more than O. K. his wife's tasteful expenditures—the grounds which she had laid out, were very beautiful; all of her possessions were of distinguished excellence. The Boston bull at her feet had been a prize winner in the last dog show, and another woman had been very anxious to buy him—a fact which had lent to Barbara's purchase of him a further zest of pleasure. She herself was as attractive as Captain Svenson told her; small, graceful with the artificial grace of the Dresden figurine, fiery with the fire of some flame-colored flower.

Much as she was enjoying the praise which Captain Svenson bestowed upon her efforts, there was a mocking undercurrent of thought that kept pace with the beat of his suave flattery in her ears. It was the thought that the architectural planner of all this splendor and beauty was even now threatening her husband with a suit for the collection of the large balance of his fee still due; that the great oaks and maples which surrounded the new house, with their air of immemorial intimacy, had not yet been paid for—and the passion for moving great trees is one of the most expensive in which a moneyed gentleman can indulge—that half the exquisite possessions of the place were theirs, the Rickerts', in name only, the bills for them being still unsettled. But it was no consuming anxiety to her to feel that this was so; rather, she had a perverse amusement in it; it was a reflection that spiced her enjoyment, gave a tang and flavor to what might

have been merely a sluggish placidity of possession. Barbara was a born gambler; adventure, danger, risk, were the ingredients which she liked strong in her dishes. It had been so from the time, when, as a girl, she had loved to bring her athletic instructor's heart into her mouth by skating where the ice was thinnest, or swimming where the local traditions pronounced a "sucking hole" to lie in wait for the daring.

Of course, no one can indulge a taste for high spicing without losing a certain nicety of the palate. Captain Svenson himself proved that, by his presence in her renowned garden. Captain Svenson was the intoxicant of the moment, particularly enjoyable because he was almost forbidden by Barbara's husband, Arthur; particularly enjoyable because he himself gave her the delicious sensation that he might be really dangerous. It was a triumph to annex such a man, to hold one's own against such a conqueror. Barbara, adept in the art of annexation, had never enjoyed its practice more than this time.

"It is the most beautiful place in America," he told her, with an air of quiet authority. "One of the most beautiful places in the world. You have been in the Princess Montesquelli's garden in Florence? This is very like it—and the Montesquellis have been some ten centuries bringing theirs to perfection!"

"Halsey copied that in part," admitted Mrs. Rickert, referring to the architect who had evolved all this from Mrs. Murphy's chicken farm.

A dimple deepened the corner of her mouth; she was thinking of Halsey's last letter to Arthur, and of Arthur's very bad temper over it. Stupid Arthur! If he wouldn't speculate on a losing side so constantly, there would be plenty of money for all the necessities of life. To be sure, he said that he speculated in the hope of clearing up enough to pay for her extravagances. Nonsense! He speculated because he liked to do it—that was why every one did everything.

"You are smiling?" suggested Captain Svenson.

She raised her eyes, brimming with lights and shadows, with mirth and allurements, and shook her head.

"I shall not tell you why," she told him.

"A thought that makes you even more beautiful than you were a moment ago is one you should share with a friend," he answered.

But her gaze left his face and traveled toward the house. Her husband was coming off the first stone-balustraded terrace of the series, and her six-year-old daughter was clinging to his hand.

"Ah, here comes Arthur," observed his wife equably, "with Winifred tagging him, as usual."

"American men make such devoted fathers," remarked Captain Svenson, not sufficiently interested in his host to look up toward the house. "And husbands, too, I dare say?" he added inquiringly.

"Perfect in both relations," purred Barbara, challenging him with a look from beneath her long lashes. But by that time Arthur was with them.

"Hello, dearest," she said amiably to him. "You're out early to-day, aren't you? Tea? Winnie, my dear, you're on my skirt."

"So's Prince Charlie," retorted Winifred. "You didn't make him get off."

Arthur, greeting Svenson with as much cordiality as he was able to summon when he recalled his lecture of only that morning to his wife, had thrown himself wearily down upon the stone seat, declining tea moodily. He was a man of thirty-six or seven, growing a little heavy in figure, a little bald, a little wrinkled. But he was still a handsome man. Not even the momentary sullenness of his brow and eyes could rob them of distinction. Not even the almost permanent line of peevishness about his mouth prevented its being of the true Apollo type.

"Have you had a hard day, dear?" inquired Barbara dutifully.

"About the usual thing—I saw Halsey," he added, after a second.

"Did you tell him he'd really have

to do something about that refrigerating plant in the cellar?" inquired Barbara blandly.

Her husband laughed shortly, as he replied: "Strange to say, that slipped my mind in the press of other matters."

Barbara did not like his tone. Why didn't he go to work and make the money to pay Halsey and all the cormorant tribe, instead of snarling at her in this covert way? She eyed him with delicate disdain for a second.

"By the way," she said, "did you know that Lady Hawthornden had come home for a visit? Great excitement in Oakdale! I suppose you'll feel it even more than the mob, won't you, Arthur? She was an old flame of yours, wasn't she?"

"I think that you are perfectly well aware that it was her sister, Amy, and not Lady Hawthornden," he began, in level tones of anger, and with a deep flush overspreading his face.

Then he paused, changed his manner with an effort. After all, whenever he made a public scene of any sort with her, she always got the better of him, he told himself dully. Why rise to her bait? Why pose before this foreign attaché of hers as a bearish American husband, lacking social grace? Hang it, that was what she wanted to make him do—the insolent little cat! That she should dare to twit him with the past! All of which thoughts were visible on his face for the half second that followed the cessation of his speech. When he resumed, it was more lightly.

"After all, it won't be any news to Svenson that you were able to make a man forget any number of early flames," he said easily. "It's a way she used to have, Svenson—maybe she has it still."

"I only know that for myself I have no past and no future when I am with Mrs. Rickert," declared Svenson extravagantly.

Barbara laughed.

"You made me the keeper of your future to the extent of telling me that you were dining to-night at the club

with Mr. Hatmeyer, when you came, Captain Svenson," she reminded him. He sprang to his feet, soldierly, lithe, erect.

"Thank you for sending me away in time to fulfill the engagement," he said. "Au revoir, *chère madame!* You have a place in a thousand, Rickert. Mademoiselle, I kiss your hand." Which he did, to Winifred's open-eyed amazement, as she cuddled against her father's shoulder.

He vanished through a gap in the hedge of spruce, and in a minute they heard the chug of the motor car which had brought him out. Then Arthur sent his daughter away, and detained his wife, who was languidly preparing to follow.

"You respect my wishes devotedly," he began.

"My dear Arthur," replied his wife incisively, "if you expect me to deny myself the amusement of talking with a cultivated and agreeable man of the world because you have some jealous crochet in your head, you might as well know now, as ever, that I won't have it. I am a free-born American, and not a Turkish slave. You do nothing whatever to amuse me. The least you can do is to let me have a little harmless intercourse with people willing to take the trouble which you refuse to take."

He looked grimly around the place.

"Your amusements are in the habit of costing me too dear when the bills come in," he observed. "I don't know where the devil I am going to raise money to stop Halsey's row," he added, swiftly veering to a particular grievance.

"And just to think," said Barbara mockingly, "that if you had married your old love, your first love, you might have had money for any number of agreeable diversions in the building line! And we all thought that I was the heiress in those days—poor Barbara, with her paltry little quarter million! How much do you suppose Ned Hilton's copper mine is worth?"

"What the devil is the matter with

you to-day, Barbara?" demanded her spouse angrily. "Why do you want to harp on the Hiltons? What had money to do with it—then? Don't you ever feel a flicker of shame over the whole business? Gad, I don't believe you do! I don't believe you do! It's nothing to you that your husband played the part of a low-down cad——"

"You see," she said icily, "I can't regard it in quite that light. According to my view, a man found me irresistible—so irresistible that he forgot his calf love, and threw over its object for my sake. And if you hadn't," she added tauntingly, "where would you have been now? You know that your father would never have bought you the partnership with Crothers if you had persisted in your desire to marry Amy Hilton, without a cent to bless herself with, and with a horde of brothers and sisters to support."

"Don't make the thing more sordid and damnable than it was!" he cried fiercely. "You know that it was you—you yourself—and nothing that my father promised or withheld, that made me false to her. Mind you, I don't blame myself for falling in love with you. You were a pretty desirable proposition in those days. And, you know—— Oh, well, what's the good of talking? I did it, and I did it in the lowest possible way. But it's done and over with. She doesn't give a hang any longer. And you and I are heels over head in debt. But there's no good in our quarreling."

"You'll admit that I never quarrel. I sometimes defend myself from attack. That is all."

"You goad me into attack. That was always your long suit, goading a man in one way or another. Look here, Bab, I don't think that new governess of Winnie's is worth her salt. The little thing looks awfully neglected."

"Let me see," said Barbara demurely, counting on the taper tips of her fingers. "One: I am an extravagant wife, and the bills are coming in. Two: Having a husband who never opens his lips in my presence, except to find fault, I talk with another man now

and then. Three: Long ago, I tempted an upright gentleman and honest lover to act faithlessly toward his adored one. Four: My child looks neglected. My dear Arthur, I have my list of little shortcomings by heart for the day. When you have new ones to add—say, to-morrow morning—I shall be, as usual, at your service. But perhaps you will excuse me now? The Malcolms and Dinwiddies are dining here to-night, you remember?"

She floated off, up the terraces, charming, graceful, maddening. He looked moodily after her. He had never been a strong man, morally, and in that easily susceptible youth of his she had played havoc with whatever small share of principle and honor his selfish bringing-up had left him. He had been engaged to Amy Hilton when she was a slip of a thing, brave and lovely, of eighteen. He had come home from his three years of leisurely surveying the nations of the world after his college days had closed. He had found the Hilton family piquant, unusual. Orphans, with the young Amy at their head, they had lived so gayly, so gallantly, so happily, in the rambling old house Professor Hilton had left them among their scanty inheritances. It had been delightful to go there, where there was no formality, no chaperonage, even though the conversation and the merrymaking were more decorous, more innocent, than in circles where the chaperons were legion. It had been delightful to play at being Amy's stalwart friend, and then her lover.

Of course it hadn't been so delightful when he found that his father would not further his matrimonial intentions by buying him the partnership in the brokerage firm which had been promised him on his return from Europe. To be a persecuted hero for the sake of an unmercenary love was all very well—for a while. But Amy had not made much of it, and it had palled. And then, his sister Martha had come home from Chicago, where she had married "well," and had brought Barbara with her. Of course, he had

known why Barbara was brought; to show him that he was a fool, to show him that he was capable of having an emotion or two unconnected with his shabby Amy, to show him how pleasant life would be if he were only sensible! To do him such scant justice as may be done, it was not Barbara's money, not his parents' unconcealed bribery, that had made him false to Amy, but Barbara herself—provocative, teasing, beautiful. And in those days he had been something of a fascinator himself.

Well, he had been false to Amy. He had made love to Barbara, he had felt hotly that only in possessing her love would he find satisfaction. And she had bewitched him into doing the most dastardly thing in the world; she had made him elope with her, and they were married while his ring still shone on Amy's finger. In after years he could never understand how the impish creature had won him to such a shameless course. She had demanded it as a test, she had insisted upon it as the only course which would not subject her to too long a strain of criticism; but how had her arguments prevailed? Oh, by means of her rose-leaf cheeks, her perfumed hair, her hands, by all the familiar armament that had grown to seem to him so commonplace when he had seen it leveled at other men.

It had been a two weeks' scandal, his marriage. He and Barbara had eloped, and had been married in New York, taking the steamer the next day for Europe. He had never been able to satisfy his devouring curiosity as to how Amy Hilton had received his letter—the graceless note of Barbara's dictation. When he had come back, when he and his wife had gone through the farce of asking forgiveness from the parents by whose connivance the affair had been arranged, and had received the mock pardon—a pardon illuminated for him by the purchase of the promised partnership—when all this had been done, he had found one day at his father's house a packet of the letters he had written to Amy, the



The canoes passed, and hands were waved and greetings called.

trifling gifts he had made her. There had been no line with them, no request for the notes she had written him—little outpourings of a sweet and eager young nature—no reproach, no recrimination.

His parents, and especially his sister Martha, had insisted that Amy was relieved, rather than mortally wounded, by the escape from the impossible engagement. Some of the friends whom he had tried to sound on the subject had snubbed him; all of them had displayed a slight intolerance of him for some time. Of course they had recovered from it; of course, men of the

world didn't go on hypocritically condemning a successful man because of a trifling matter of unfaithfulness in an imprudent engagement. If he had never again had an intimate, comradely relation with any man, as he had had one or two during his college days, he had ascribed the lack to the inevitable process of age. But easily as he convinced himself that his lapse from the standard of conduct set up for civilized man had cost him nothing with the world, he never lost his morbid desire to know how Amy herself really had "taken it."

He had not seen her again for three

or four years; the elder Rickerts had moved from Oakdale shortly after his marriage. Then, one day, when he was in the old town for almost the first time after his honeymoon, on an errand of extrication for his wife's young brother, who was in difficulties with the school authorities, he had seen Amy advancing toward him along one of the college walks. It was a wine-clear October day, and the red woodbine that wreathed the gray stone buildings had made a vivid background for her. His heart had almost stopped beating as his old love had undulated along the curving path, walking with the grace and lightness and pride that were a Hilton inheritance. What would she do? Would she cut him? Would she sneer? Would she faint? Would the old love leap to her eyes? Ought he to turn and flee, to make a detour?

And while his thoughts scurried, panic-stricken, back and forth, she was coming on. He never forgot the moment she saw him, bringing her wide, beautiful gaze back from the hills along the horizon, and meeting his miserable face. It had all been over in a second. Her look had deepened a trifle, concentrated itself upon him. Her calm eyes had met his wretched, skulking, appealing ones. He had stood stone-still for a second, but her steps had not faltered, their time had not changed the fraction of a pace. Gravely, she had inclined her head in a salutation that held no hint of feeling, no remembrance, no rancor, no shame, no pleading, and had passed him.

Some insanity had made him take Barbara into his confidence as to the meeting—the burning desire to talk and the burning, shamed sense that only with the companion of his infamy could he discourse upon its effects. Barbara had gone off into peals of laughter, and the conversation had ended as so many of their conversations had a way of ending, after the first blaze of their selfish passion had died down. But, had he only known it, Barbara dated her determination to have a show place at Oakdale from that day. Some devil of perversity that ruled her in her re-

lations with the husband she had won by such base means dictated her decision; and as the elder Rickert held a mortgage on Mrs. Murphy's farm, and the tide of fashion, or of as near-fashion as the younger Mrs. Rickert hoped at that time to compass, had set toward the north Jersey hills, she had found the accomplishment of her desire easy.

The innocent diversion she had promised herself in the sight of her husband's discomfort and Amy's suffering would, of course, be marred by the prominence and prosperity that had begun to brighten the Hilton fortunes shortly afterward. Ned Hilton, going West from the engineering department of the school two years after Arthur Rickert's marriage, had taken a gambler's chance on an abandoned silver mine, and had struck a rich yield of copper. Besides, he had made acquaintance with Eric Fraser, a young Briton, who was trying to secure a competence through his profession of engineer. He was the younger son of an impoverished noble family, and had no thought of, and no desire for, succession, his elder brother being engaged to marry a girl of fortune, and to carry on the family line, as elder brothers should. Eric had, therefore, cheerfully permitted himself, on a visit East, the luxury of falling in love with Rose Hilton, had married her without serious family obstruction, and gone cheerfully back to Nevada. But Clarence, his elder brother, had died three weeks before the day set for his wedding. That the sister of Arthur's old flame should become an English lady of title, casting the glamour of aristocratic position over the inhabitants of the rambling, shabby, old house, had been no part of Barbara's plan. Neither had she been able to foresee that Ned's colossal luck would be followed by young Lester's patenting of a signal device for railroads, and that Ned's fortune would be useful in placing the device upon the market until it was able to take its place there on its own strength, securing Lester against all the inventor's customary

trials. But she was one who accepted things as she found them, and she hoped that, in some way not yet made plain to her, she would derive an implicit satisfaction from her residence in Oakdale.

To-night, however, as she dressed for dinner, she was not thinking much of her plans for the embarrassment of her husband and his former fiancée, or of his financial entanglements, his emotional complications, or of anything connected with him. Her eyes were sparkling with pleasant reflections, her lips curved with gaiety, her soft cheeks were brilliant with blood that leaped in happy anticipations. She was well embarked upon her favorite amusement, one that outranked even husband baiting in her estimation—flirtation. In Halmer Svenson she had a playmate worthy her best skill, and she modestly told herself that her skill had greatly increased since the season she had gambled for Arthur, and had won him. She also told herself that her taste had improved, mistaking her weariness of her husband for a more discriminating standard in men.

Suddenly, she laughed aloud. Her maid ventured to inquire the cause of madame's mirth, but madame did not reveal it. It had merely occurred to her that, as a joke and an example of feminine magnanimity, she might divorce Arthur, marry the Swede, and turn her ex-husband and her child over to Amy for healing and repair.

"Her brothers would give her enough money to set Arthur on his feet again," she told herself, "and the divinely forgiving rôle would suit her down to the ground. She's getting on, and she was never much of a beauty, to my mind." And she looked at herself, with a close scrutiny that finally melted into frank pleasure. "Oh, Barbara, Barbara, the world is a most entertaining place!" she finished her reflections.

CHAPTER III.

"Amy says she isn't going," said Rose to her brother, Lester, as he ran up the path from the road before the

house late in the afternoon of an exquisite May day. Lester paused abruptly.

"Why not?" he demanded, in a low voice.

"You needn't whisper; she's off in the woods somewhere, and she'll come home by and by, with her hands full of white violets and anemones, and her eyes full of lovely lights. I wonder what it is that Amy finds in the woods to make her face so shining sweet?"

"Why isn't she coming to the club to-night?" Lester called his sister back from the vague realms of psychology.

"Well, if you ask me," replied Rose, coming to earth herself, "I think that she doesn't want to meet the Rickerts. All that stuff you told me about her not minding was nonsense, Les, and exactly like a man. Unless she fainted or wept, you wouldn't know that she was moved; and Amy's not likely to make scenes. But I think that she has never met them without misery."

"Has she said so?"

"Have you lived twenty-six years with Amy to ask me such a question? 'Said' so! Lester, you may be a wonder in invention, but you've got about as much intuition, and about as much knowledge of the feminine heart as—Don Carlos, here!" And she patted the head of the big, sorrowful-eyed St. Bernard, who had come up beside her. "Of course, she has said nothing, but I've been out of the kindergarten class for some time. If you want to know exactly what I think, I think she has heard the rumors which seem to be rife over Oakdale about the unhappiness of his married life—the beast's, I mean—and— Oh, you know your sister Amy! You know all her tenderness, her motherliness. And she was in love with him—with a girl's love, Lester, and that is very spontaneous and eager and warm. My poor Amy!"

"Do you mean to tell me," began the indignant young man, "that she is in love with him now? If you do, I'll disown you both."

"No, silly-billiken! But she may pity him, and she may remember; and so

she doesn't want to see them, when she can avoid it. Of course, when she can't avoid it, she knows how to act like—father's daughter," ended Lady Hawthornden, with the air of one in whose veins flows "all the blood of all the Howards."

"Well, she's got to see them to-night," stated Lester decidedly. "That little cat of a woman shan't think that she's going to keep Amy in retirement because she has built a palace here, from which to flaunt herself. If you don't make her come, I shall, that's all; and you can probably do it more tactfully."

"If you dare to bother Amy——"

"I shall, if you haven't diplomacy enough to bring the affair off without my butting in. So you're warned. Why, everybody would know why she stayed at home. The other meetings with the Rickerts have been chance ones; but with him the president of the new club and me the treasurer, and the whole thing opening to-night in a blaze of glory, of course the Rickerts are going to be there, and of course I am going to be there. If she doesn't come, there'll be but one interpretation, and that one I'm not going to have."

They went into the wide hall, that divided the old house in two.

"I love this place," sighed Rose peacefully. "It's almost the only house in Oakdale that isn't bristling with newness and correctness. You don't know how many American houses, Les, give me the feeling that their owners never had any furniture worth keeping until the year before last; never had any association with their old things which was worth preserving. But here you feel that people have dwelt in self-respecting style for years."

"Spoken like the mother of nobles!" scoffed Lester.

"Bosh!" cried Rose, with inelegant anger. "As if the Hiltons weren't as good as the Frasers, any day in the week!"

There was a back piazza built against one corner of the house, with a haphazard ell running off from it. A

glass door led from the front hall to this, and the brother and sister saw Amy through it at that moment. It was as Rose had said it would be; her hands were full of damp, pure, sweet spring things, her eyes full of tranquil happiness. But behind her there loomed another figure.

"By Jakes!" commented Lester, dropping into a childhood expletive once fondly supposed to be a happy combination of explosive force with entire moral innocuousness. "If it isn't Tommy Hackett! He hasn't been here since last commencement time!"

Tommy Hackett, whatever the length of his absence from the Hiltons', was perfectly at ease now. He followed Amy in with an unembarrassed, cheerful air—a well-built man of thirty-five or six, with nothing of the scholar's pallor or abstraction about him, though he was a mathematician. His brown hair was thick and grizzled; his brown complexion almost melted into it; his close-clipped brown beard began to show a sprinkling of gray. His eyes, though, were abundantly youthful, with something of the light of delighted anticipation which belongs to early life.

"I met Mr. Hackett on Barber's Hill, coming back from the woods," explained Amy, "and brought him in to see you, Rose."

"I've been in Chicago," explained Mr. Hackett, "or I should have heard that you were home, earlier, and been over to greet you."

"You're going to the club to-night, of course, Hackett?" This from Lester.

"Yes. I'm dining there with the Martins. It's to be a gala occasion, isn't it? I dare say Oakdale can support an institution of that sort, now that the great have come among us, but I confess I liked the little old field club from which this splendid organization was evolved. The idle rich, to quote my economist friend Henderson, touch nothing that they don't spoil for the rest of the world."

"You talk like a newspaper-made socialist!" scoffed Lester.

Hackett laughed. Then he turned to Amy. "You're going, of course?"

She shot a glance of embarrassed appeal toward her brother.

"I thought," she faltered, "that I—really, you know, I hate big, noisy evenings. I haven't danced for two or three years."

"Of course, she's coming," interrupted the tyrannical Lester.

"She has to sacrifice herself to that extent for my sake," chimed in Rose blithely. "I shall be making the most awful breaks in recognizing people without her to help me. You know," with a charming air of helplessness, "I've grown terribly nearsighted, and I'm much too vain to wear glasses, but none of my old acquaintances would ascribe my dullness in recalling them to the true cause."

Amy and Lester both stared in some astonishment at hearing of Rose's optical disability.

"Oh, you'd have to come, even if Lady Hawthornden weren't likely to be regarded as a base, set-up, snobbish soul without your aid." Thus Mr. Hackett, turning toward Amy. "I don't suppose we natives—the collegians are all 'natives,' no matter where they were born—will ever have such another chance to see the newcomers in mass. Though what they want with a club like this, when all their houses are run like clubs, I don't know."

"Oh, their ways are all past finding out," said Lester. "However, as an officer of the club, I think you are going to find it an improvement on the little old field club of your fond recollection. Remember how the locker doors always warped after a rain so that you couldn't open them? Remember the awful food that steward before the last used to insult our palates with? The 'idle rich' have their uses, Hackett."

"Oh, you successful inventors are so closely allied to them that, of course, you see them through rosy glasses. The only perfectly sane, clear, unprejudiced observers in the world are college professors, on a salary of—well, I won't mention the pitiable sum. But

I'll see you all to-night?" His eyes sought Amy's rather than the others'.

"Indeed, yes," replied Rose, and the gentle, elder sister knew that there was no escape from the hated ordeal for her.

She dressed for the affair with care. Her hands were cold and tremulous. The chambermaid, who was the only personal attendant Amy permitted herself, even in her enlarged fortunes, noted the indecision of her manner on the subject of gowns, the alternations of pallor and high color on her cheeks, the restlessness and nervousness of her bearing. All Oakdale knew Amy's poor romance, of course, and her servants had it, or a version of it, by heart. Gloriana was very anxious that her lovely lady should acquit herself with high credit, and she offered to procure her a little rouge as a means to that desired end. With that suggestion, Amy shook herself together; if she was beginning to wear her heart on her sleeve, for the edification of her handmaids, it was high time that she took herself to task. So she piled her hair upon her head until it was like the crown of a young queen—she kept the look of unquenchable youth which unworldly people sometimes manage to retain into late life—and she held her slender neck proudly. After all, was she not her dear father's daughter, the sister of a woman famous for charm, of men famous for ability? And of her gowns, she chose one that was of clinging, gold-colored stuff, intensified, after the clever French manner, by a dash of inky black among the laces at the décolletage. In figure, carriage, and dignity, she was a woman—a superb woman, as Rose and the boys told one another when she had joined them; but her face was unconquerably young, appealing, eager, even in its studied repose.

The Hilton party had not been of those who had driven the steward of the new club to distraction by entertaining a large party at dinner in the room which was later to be used for the supper after the dance. They had dined at home, and it was ten o'clock,



"It's everything, then!" he cried drunkenly.

and the reception had begun when they motored out.

Barbara Rickert had kept her place in the reception line longer than any one had expected her to, and much longer than Halmer Svenson thought necessary, because she wanted to be present to welcome Amy. Barbara did not study her own mental processes overmuch, and could not have told why she longed for the meeting, what perverse pleasure she hoped to obtain from it. But she knew that what she wanted was something even more alluring to her imagination than the next step of her daring flirtation with the Swedish

attaché. She had dressed for the encounter in the most ravishing frock her admirably stocked wardrobe afforded; she was a shimmering water witch, in green and silver. There was not another costume in the room which "touched" hers for character and effectiveness; there was not another figure which commanded such instant attention, despite her petiteness.

And yet, when Amy and Rose floated up to the receiving party and made the appropriate exclamations of delight over the new club building, and of pleased anticipation for the evening, she did not have the thrill for which she

had waited. She had half confided to Captain Svenson that she was to measure strength that night with her husband's former fiancée. "Whom, to tell the truth, he had very much better have married than me," she had remarked provocatively; and he was half impatiently, half expectantly, awaiting the encounter. But the leap of admiration in his eyes had been for Rose, and it was with her that he claimed a brief, casual London acquaintance. And as for Amy, she walked with such simple pride, such gentle nobility, she was so undeniably graceful, even if she had not the strict, vivid beauty of face that was Barbara's, and her countenance shone with such inner loveliness, that the situation was not quite what the wife of Arthur Rickert had hoped it would be.

"We had expected that you would receive with us to-night, Miss Hilton," she purred. "Being the head of your brother's house, we thought, perhaps, you would not mind foregoing your girl's rights, and play at being grown up."

But even as she uttered the words, she knew that they had failed of her intention, either in stabbing Amy with the reminder of her years, her spinsterhood, her foregone chance of marriage, or of impressing the hearers with her wicked cleverness. Amy laughed full-heartedly.

"Dear me!" she cried, "I was not claiming a girl's privileges, Mrs. Rickert—I chaperon no end of college festivities; but, while my sister is with us for a little visit, I am staying at home a great deal. That is all."

"You shouldn't keep Lady Hawthornden shut up," protested Barbara rather witlessly. "I am sure she looks like a girl who loves gayety." And her eyes shot a rather malignant spark at Rose, renewing acquaintance with Captain Svenson.

"She is," smiled Amy. "But she came over partly to escape the London season." Her eyes betrayed a humorous sense of comparison between London and Oakdale in the matter of gayety.

"Ah, to be sure," drawled Barbara. Then, spitefully: "I wonder where Arthur is? He's so anxious to see you again for a real renewal of your acquaintance, Miss Hilton? We've had only such brief snatches of Oakdale until our shack was built that he has had no real chance to—"

Amy's level eyes looked steadily upon her.

"I hear you have a wonderful place," she said evenly, ignoring the reference to Arthur. "I have not happened to be on Cobblestone Road lately, and I have not seen it myself since it was finished. Ah! Pardon me, I see Miss Dwyer."

And she effected her escape toward the old autocrat of Oakdale, who, aquiline, withered, even gnarled, walked through the rooms on her gold-headed cane, and shot fear into all hearts as she approached. Miss Dwyer was the woman whose ancestors had owned all of Oakdale, and not a little of New York. She was horribly rich, abominably shrewd, and outspoken to a degree which made her a social pest. It was toward her that Amy moved, as toward a dear friend. But before she was obliged to encounter the antique *enfant terrible* of the community, in lavender and pearl color and priceless point lace, Thomas Hackett intervened.

"Oh!" she gasped, half laughing. "Do take me over the place, will you? I don't see either of the boys."

"I can show you the club as well as they can. Come on—Miss Dwyer is bearing down on us!"

But they did not quite escape her.

"Where are you running off to?" she demanded harshly—she had a villainous voice that made even her few innocuous observations sound malignant. "I want to speak to Amy, Thomas Hackett. Don't hurry her away in that fashion."

"How do you do, Miss Dwyer?" said Amy, dutifully pausing at the elder woman's side.

"I am quite as well as usual, and much you care how I am! But I want to tell you that I'm glad to see you out in society. I've never approved of

your making a recluse of yourself, and I've always told you so. But now, you'll have to go out; your sister Rose isn't going to be immured during her visit. She isn't that kind. She'd better stop talking to that man, Svenson, though, unless she wishes to increase——"

"There comes your old friend, the dean, Miss Dwyer," interrupted Thomas Hackett. And while Miss Dwyer's pearl-handled lorgnon was directed toward the door through which her arch-enemy in Oakdale was entering the room, he drew Amy out of her neighborhood.

"Oh, that professorial person has taken Amy away, has he?" quoth the old lady, putting her lorgnon back among her laces, and frowning near-sightedly after the escaping pair. "Too bad! I wanted to warn her that her brother Lester is speculating; he's a foolish child, and she should stop it; lock him up in the nursery, and give him bread-and-butter suppers until he promises to behave himself. Jonas, my man of business, told me all about it; Lester's speculation, I mean. Amy ought to know. And I wanted to tell her to beware of Arthur Rickert tonight; he drank too much champagne at dinner; and, if that hadn't been enough, that viperish, little wife of his was doing her best all the time to provoke him into some sort of an outbreak. The lightning's very bad here. Well, upon my word!" She ended indignantly. For she had cleared a little space about the spot where she stood, and her final words were addressed to the backs of the last of her circle to escape. "How people hate the truth!" she finished.

Meantime, Amy and her escort had made a circuit of the rooms. In the cardroom, they had discovered her brother Lester one of a set at bridge, in which Arthur Rickert was also playing. The combination brought a look of hurt surprise into Amy's eyes. Lester had never told her of his employment of Rickert as broker, and, indeed, she did not know that the boy—so she always thought of the younger of her brothers—was investing, or

speculating, to a degree to make a broker a necessity. She was hurt by the sight of the two men, in easy, smiling intercourse. Her eyes rested on Arthur only a second; he was still a handsome man, in figure and coloring, in contour of features, the statuesque fellow whose appearance had been so keen a delight to her proud and loving girl's heart a decade ago. Nearer observation would show lines of peevishness, lines of self-indulgence, the coarsening of complexion and expression, which belong to a decade of pleasure seeking, with all its futilities and dissatisfactions. But for a second, and at a distance, he was the same compelling, almost godlike creature she had once looked upon so fondly.

On Lester, slender, clean-cut, purposeful for all the youth and untouched gayety of his features, she looked longer and with almost a reproachful light in her gray eyes. Lester, the baby of the family when her mother had died, had been her particular pride and pet during the hard years of her girlhood, when, ignorant, young, and untrained, she had tried to make a home for her father and brothers. Lester, four years her junior, only eleven when his father died, and only seven when his mother had died, had been more dependent upon her than the twins, Rose and Ned, two years his seniors. He had not been ashamed to let her see his tears over bruises or cuts, his fears of the dark and the lonesome stairs to his room; she had helped him through so many little childish troubles for which the older brother and sister scorned to require help. He had been used to cuddle down in her arms at dusk, after their mother had first left them, and to beg her for a song—not that Amy could sing, but that she had come to take his mother's place to the little lad.

And when those earliest relations of dependence and protection were passed, still the intimacy had continued. Mutually devoted as the entire Hilton family was, the twins paired off together, and Amy and Lester, with a little extra fondness. When the ugly wound had

been dealt Amy at Arthur Rickert's hand, it was Lester, and only Lester, to whom she opened her heart at all. The two others had been out the afternoon when the postman's blithe whistle at the gate before the rambling old house had been the signal for Amy to come and receive it. Lester had been at home, perfecting an invention in his room in the attic, to which he had been banished on account of the noises and odors that usually proceeded from his workshop, into which his bedroom was always converted. He had heard the whistle, and had come downstairs to see if the manufacturers of electrical appliances to whom he had recently written for a circular, had sent it. And he had seen Amy, who had frankly and eagerly run to the gate, in the hope of finding a letter from the recreant Arthur, walking up the path, tearing open an envelope. She had paused, midway, to read the sheet which she drew out of the case.

And she had stood quite still, motionless, speechless, with it held before her, making no reply to his: "Anything for me, sis?" turning no page, stricken into immobility. He had been frightened into silence, and had stood a few feet from her, waiting some sign to tell him the nature of the disaster which he knew had fallen. Suddenly, she had raised her eyes toward the world, had looked about her, frightened, unbelieving, as though she did not know the familiar place, the familiar landscape, as though she had been suddenly transported to some new, strange world, in which she found herself alone and helpless. She had put her finger tips quickly to her lips, as though to repress a cry of horror at the unknown terrors which surrounded her. And then she had felt the boy's arms around her, had seen his eyes reflecting the fright in her own, had heard his voice crying: "Amy, Amy, what is it?"

She was not alone in the new and terrible universe! She was not alone! She had clung to him with a sense of desperate relief. And she had passed him the letter to read, for she could not speak, though her breath came in

little, gasping sobs of relief because she was not alone, not alone, in that desolation, that barren, dead world into which Arthur Rickert's letter had plunged her.

When the boy had read the brief missive, it had fluttered to the ground between them, and he had folded her close in his arms, laying his cheek to hers.

"I'll kill him, I'll kill him!" he had kept repeating, and she had only breathed in the long-drawn, panting breaths of exhaustion.

But by and by she had recovered herself, and had bade him not to speak as he was speaking; she had forced her will, her reason, her self-control to return to her, that she might calm him, might teach him nobleness. And when she had hushed his impotent, childish threats, she had known the salvation of a gush of tears upon his breast. He, holding her to him, soothing her with awkward motions of his hands, had looked out at the world across her bowed head and had registered his silent oath that the man who had wrought her this misery should suffer for it; but he had threatened no more in words, and had promised her, without her asking it, that he would tell the others nothing except what she chose to tell them.

And that little lad, who that day ten years before had been initiated into the world of torture and of wrong, and of protection and tenderness—the world of men and women, instead of the child's world in which he had dwelt before—that little, ardent, loving boy was the man who was smiling across a card table at Arthur Rickert to-night! Amy paled a little as she turned to Thomas Hackett.

"The decorations are lovely," she said; "and, as they have been claiming, very appropriate. But I want to see the squash courts."

And Thomas Hackett had taken her out of the clubhouse, and through the grounds, whose electric lights were masquerading as simple Japanese lanterns, toward the squash courts.

It was not until the dancing had

begun in the big hall that the inevitable encounter with Arthur befell her. She was standing near the stairway, with a little group of friends and courtiers about her, watching Rose's lissome figure floating through a waltz with a junior from the college, who was raised to the n-th power of delight by her condescension and charm. Suddenly, there appeared from around the bend of the stairs a group, composed of the two Rickerts and Captain Svenson. Arthur had obviously been drinking more than was good for him.

"This is my dance, not Svenson's," he asserted, with a laugh that verged on the maudlin, putting his hand on his wife's arm, as though to whirl her off.

She withdrew, with a very palpable gesture of aversion, and Arthur's eyes looked upon her malevolently. Svenson made some diversion, or tried to do so, but Arthur was breaking into an angry speech when Barbara happened to catch sight of Amy. She pushed forward, with a little evil smile.

"Here is Miss Hilton, Arthur. Perhaps she will dance with you, since she seems to be disengaged for this. Miss Hilton, do take pity on a distraught wife; dance with my husband, who will not learn the first rule of civilized society, which is that husbands and wives go into company in order to avoid each other."

The flush had faded from Arthur's cheek at the first intimation that Amy stood near him. He looked at her dumbly for a second. She, too, grew white, as her eyes encountered his miserable, suddenly sobered ones.

"There'll be battle, murder, and sudden death if Miss Hilton does anything of the kind, Mrs. Rickert," announced Thomas Hackett lightly. "She's dancing this with me, and we only stopped for a moment's breathing—I'm an old fellow for these terpsichorean delights. Have we rested long enough?"

He turned to Amy, put his hand upon her arm, and whirled her away. He had not waltzed in thirteen years, and she had not known that he danced at all. But somehow their feet found the

beat of the music, and they whirled around with as much an appearance of enjoyment as the rest of the room.

"Thank you," said Amy, when they had come to a pause with the sudden ceasing of the music.

"The thanks are all mine. I had forgotten what a pleasure waltzing was."

"Oh, you don't need to pretend to misunderstand," cried Amy, with unwonted passion. "Thank you for saving me from that hateful, humiliating scene."

"Don't, my dear, don't," answered Thomas Hackett, who had told himself only that afternoon that it was quite safe for him to resume friendly relations with the Hiltons, because he had quite recovered from his attack of emotional desire for Amy, and was able to view her without a tinge of longing as a charming and agreeable woman, with whom a sensible, middle-aged man might have a satisfactory friendship. "Don't mock me with thanks, when you won't let me do anything for you."

"But I will; I'll even ask you to do something for me," she broke in upon his earnestness, with an insistent, frightened lightness. "I'll ask you to find Lester for me, and to tell him I've gone to make ready for home, and that I'd like him to telephone for the car at once. No one else need bother to come with me. Rose is her own chaperon now, and she's having such a good time!"

"I'll find him," answered the professor.

He did not have far to look. Lester was strolling across the ballroom floor in pleasant converse with Arthur Rickert. In spite of herself, a flush of indignation mantled Amy's cheek.

"Don't bother!" she said shortly. "I'll—I'll take a carriage; I'll—"

"I'll have one at the entrance in three minutes. May I go home with you?"

"If you will be so good," said Amy.

She averted her eyes from the hateful, incomprehensible sight of her brother Lester in intimate, friendly converse with Arthur Rickert, and sped

toward the dressing rooms, the protecting figure of Mr. Hackett looming between her and them until she had reached the stairs. But he could not accompany her to the upper sanctuaries, or guard her against Miss Dwyer, who was also preparing to escape.

"Your brother—the young one, the inventor—shows bad judgment, as well

ter's broker. "At any rate, I hope he will take no lessons in finance for which he cannot pay," she added sweetly.

But as one of Oakdale's antiquated hacks rattled home with her, Thomas Hackett sitting beside her in a state of mingled bliss at his nearness and of gloom to discover that he still called it bliss to be with her, the hot tears stung her eyelids. To think, to think



"Go ahead. I sha'n't mind. I shall be in State's prison."

as bad taste, in his broker, my dear," remarked the dreadful old lady. "Jonas, my man of business, tells me that Rickert will be in difficulties in no time, and drag his firm with him, unless he mends his ways. With thousands of brokers doing business in New York, it's queer your brother should choose him, isn't it?"

"Lester is, I think, quite competent to manage his own affairs," replied Amy, trying to conceal her astonishment at the news that Rickert was Les-

ter's broker. "At any rate, I hope he will take no lessons in finance for which he cannot pay," she added sweetly. But as one of Oakdale's antiquated hacks rattled home with her, Thomas Hackett sitting beside her in a state of mingled bliss at his nearness and of gloom to discover that he still called it bliss to be with her, the hot tears stung her eyelids. To think, to think

CHAPTER IV.

Lester Hilton's office and workshop were no longer in the attic of the Oakdale house. He still sought altitude, to be sure, but he found it in the eighteenth story of an office building, soar-

ing into the blue above a line of warehouses and wharves, on the water front. It was here, a day or two after the opening of the Oakdale clubhouse, that he was visited by an anæmic, eager young man.

"Hello, Green," Lester greeted him, with a suppressed eagerness; "what's the good word?"

"We've got him where we want him," answered the other. His sunken eyes gleamed, and a color burned on his prominent cheek bones. He coughed as he spoke, and Lester darted a friendly, worried glance at him.

"How's your cough?"

"Better—much better." Green hurried over the subject of his health. "But let me tell you how things are standing in the office now."

"Go ahead." Lester leaned back in the revolving chair, his whole face and figure one point of concentrated interest. Green fumbled nervously in an inside pocket, and then produced a memorandum.

"I have the notes here of the transaction with Mrs. Van Cott," he said. "Almost everything has been verified. It was last November when the interior woodwork men on the place at Oakdale had laid down their tools and walked out; Rickert hadn't paid the general contractors their first installment, which was then overdue about a month, and they were behind with the interior workers. That was the time Mrs. Van Cott came to us and wanted to borrow twenty thousand dollars on three hundred shares of Carson Preferred. They had been steady, at a hundred and eighty-four, or thereabouts, for two years—they're as secure as government bonds. Her son was in some financial difficulty, and she wanted to raise the money to help him out. Old Crothers was away, laid up with inflammatory rheumatism; young Crothers was off on his wedding trip. The whole actual transaction was up to Rickert. Of course, he consulted old Crothers over the telephone, and was told to go ahead and arrange the loan. We made it ourselves, Crothers having the money. I was present when

the shares were delivered by her—she's a fine-looking old lady, Mr. Hilton; and, although she is a rich one and a fashionable one, there was something about her which reminded me of my own mother." He broke off in his narration, and his eyes were absent for a minute.

"Yes," Lester reminded him gently, after the pause. "You were present the day Mrs. Van Cott produced the securities for her loan?" Young Green came swiftly back into the present.

"Yes. You know, I'm notary for the firm, as well as chief clerk. I was there to attest the signatures, and all that. I saw him receive the stock certificates, and go to the safe with them. I saw him open it and put them away. They were in a big, sealed package, with a memorandum of their contents on the outside. He came back from the safe, smiling, and full of affable compliments to the widow, and she went away with the check in her purse that I had taken up for Mr. Crothers to sign that morning, and to his bank for certification. You know, in a way, Crothers is an old-fashioned man. No check can be drawn without his O. K., and no check for more than five thousand, except by himself. Well, she went off. Three days later, I know that work was resumed on the Rickerts' Oakdale place, the first installment having been paid the general contractors by him, and the gloom was considerably lifted from Rickert's brow. The day before, the market report had recorded the sale of two hundred shares of Carson Preferred for a hundred and eighty; four points under what it was selling for normally. The sale was made by the Ramseys, I learned. The Ramseys and Rickert are always having dealings—and you know what the standing of the Ramseys is!" he ended contemptuously.

"Crooked as the ram's horn, aren't they?"

"Not a straight line in them. They've been warned by the governors that one more affair of the kind they're in the habit of pulling off will cost them their seat on the exchange. But you

can't frighten them into square dealing. They'll come an awful smash some day. However, that's neither here nor there, so far as Mrs. Van Cott's stock is concerned. You know that old Crothers had a bad winter of it, being away a great deal. And young Crothers is an ass. He might as well take a perpetual honeymoon, as far as his value to the office is concerned. Rickert has had a pretty free swing there all the winter. Well, about a week ago, Mrs. Van Cott telephoned him that she was coming down to redeem her Carson Preferred. I was in Rickert's office when she called him, and I gathered from his replies what she was saying. He promptly put her off—was 'just leaving the office, and both the Crotherses were out of town.' And since then he's been dodging her. He leaves word when he comes in from 'change that he cannot see any women clients. He doesn't dare give her name out and out, so he has to keep out all women. Old Crothers is off again—I doubt if he'll ever be back on the Street. I was at his house before he went out to Hot Springs, for some last signatures, and he looks like a dead man now. And Arthur—it comes natural to call him that, now and then—can wind the young fellow around his little finger. Well, yesterday I was in his private office, when Mrs. Van Cott succeeded in getting him on the telephone again. He was at the safe, looking for some papers Crothers had wired up about, when the bell on his desk sounded. He asked me to answer it. I did, and it was Mrs. Van Cott who spoke—rather shortly, too. She's not a fool, and she's not a young woman, to be cozened by Arthur's straight nose and short upper lip!"

Then, realizing what the relation of the man of whom he was talking had been to the man whom he addressed, he flushed all over his thin, sharp, sensitive face.

"Never mind; go on," said Lester, reading his embarrassment.

"Well, he had to go to the phone, but I heard him curse Lottie Schmidt, the girl in charge of our switch board,

under his breath, as he went. And he sent me off on a fool's errand to the other end of the offices before he began his conversation. I managed to get back before it was quite over. And it so happened that he didn't have another free second for the next half hour, with phone calls and people to see him. Finally, he had to say to me: 'See here, Green, you'll have to find those papers for the Old Man, and send them by Wells-Fargo to him,' referring to something Crothers had wired for. And then, he gave me the combination of the safe. It was the first time I had ever had it. I have the combination to the outer office safes, but not to the one in his room or in Mr. Crothers'. Well, as he dashed out, I dashed after him. 'I'm going to have Henley with me while I close it,' I told him. I had a sudden feeling that I didn't want to be alone with the damned thing. He scowled at me, but that was all. Henley was there when I went through the safe to get the papers Mr. Crothers wanted. To find them, I made it necessary to go over all the papers in the safe. The Carson Preferred certificates are not there."

"They may have been transferred to Mr. Crothers' safe or the main safe," suggested Lester.

"They are not in either. For Mr. Crothers sent me his combination a day later. They're gone—disappeared—stolen!"

"I am as sure of it as you, Green; but how are we going to prove it? How are we going to bring him to book for it? He may be able to slip through Mrs. Van Cott's fingers. After all, she's only a woman—an elderly, old-fashioned woman, with not much knowledge of modern finance, for all her shrewdness and thrift."

Green arose, and stood, in his shabby suit, at the window. Over the low roofs of the surrounding buildings and the wharves, he saw the traffic-laden Hudson, with the busy downtown Jersey shore beyond. The blue sky that arched between the shores was mild and lovely. He looked upon it all for a moment, as though to draw a deep

breath of courage for some daring plan, while Lester attentively studied his back. Then he turned to the big, sunny, barnlike room again, with its workman's desk, its draughting tables, its models on stands and cases against the walls.

"I've thought it all out," he announced. "I've had it in mind ever since I first spoke to you on the subject of my grudge against the Rickerts. And if you are as much in earnest as I am about——" He broke off.

"I am entirely in earnest. There has never been a day since my sister—since I first had cause to hate him—that I have faltered in my purpose, although I have not known how it was to be achieved." Lester spoke with a calmness more convincing than any vehemence.

"You must borrow from our firm. You must put up good securities. He cannot withstand the temptation to raise money on them. He is overrun with creditors. He is desperate. He is on the verge of discovery by Mrs. Van Cott, who will not be put off much longer. He will be obliged, in some way or other, to buy her off. She didn't follow her certificates. You will. You've got the money to see it through?" he added fiercely.

"I have. And the money—well, you'll be no loser by it."

"Oh, me!" Green dismissed himself lightly, wearily, indifferently. "Since you've sent Martie to the Adirondacks, I'm paid for everything in advance."

"I'm going to send you there the instant this thing is over," declared Lester. "Or, rather, you're going to send yourself there. Gad, when I think of your mother's struggle to bring you children up in that disease-breeding old place that old man Rickert wouldn't leave her enough out of for so much as a new shingle on, and then foreclosed on, when your sister lay dying, and Arthur wouldn't lift his little finger to help you—it was horrible! You have a bigger debt to pay Master Arthur than I have. However, between us, we'll do it, Thad."

"We will, Les," agreed Thaddeus

Green, falling into the old habit of speech that had prevailed when he, a big farm boy, had been wont to reveal the mysteries of the woods about Oakdale to Captain Hilton's brood. A remembrance of traps set, of youthful lessons in hunting, softened both faces for a minute. And then they were back at the affair in hand. They planned, with eager avidity, the utter undoing of Arthur Rickert. If Green's was the bitterer grudge, if it had its foundation in memories of his widowed mother's unavailing struggle in the death trap of the elder Rickert's ownership, of his youngest sister's pitiful suffering and death, in the present sting of a thousand daily slights and insults borne by himself now, Lester's eagerness for revenge was as great. He had the requisite weapon with which to strike. While the afternoon deepened into splendor, and then paled into dusk, they were still planning details of their scheme. And when Thaddeus finally left the younger man, and went, coughing, out into the evening, with spots of color on his high cheek bones, and a feverish light in his sunken eyes, Lester looked out upon the glittering evening panorama of the river and sighed the full sigh of satisfaction.

"If only Amy could be made to feel about it as I do," he mused, after his first anticipation of triumph.

That reflection clouded his mood a little. Some of Rose's remarks occurred to him. Could it be that she still cared? Women had such strange notions of the meaning of faith! Well, if any remnant of that mutilated early love of hers dwelt in her yet, what could so perfectly kill it as the proof of Arthur Rickert's total dishonor? Perhaps he would be doing Amy a present service, as well as paying off an old debt, when he held the base, trivial creature up to the scorn of all the world.

CHAPTER V.

Rose, choosing to enact the part of the innocent siren, hastened the climax in the domestic affairs of the Rickerts. Halmer Svenson admired

her lively ladyship very sincerely. Moreover, he was not at all sure that he wished to become hopelessly involved with the fascinating Mrs. Rickert. And, furthermore, he had felt for some time the need of a weapon to use against that arch-coquette. She had been too sure of him, and much too sure of herself. So he devoted himself rather conspicuously to Rose when his diplomatic duties permitted him to be in the neighborhood of New York, which happened frequently, as he was possessed of a sort of roving commission in regard to American fortifications, and was not on duty constantly in Washington. He did not cease to play the dangerous game of hearts with Barbara; he was far too much interested in it to abandon it with the score so tepidly even. But he used his honest admiration of Lady Hawthornden as one of the adjuncts of his equipment in the play with Barbara, until that fiery little person's jealousy was such as almost to convince her that she was honestly in love.

Still, beneath all her ardor after conquest, all her insatiability of admiration, of sensation, there was something calculating in Barbara Rickert. She had made one marriage of greed and passion, and she had been bored almost to extinction by it. She had tasted to dust and ashes the fruits of her own victory, and she was inclined to be wary of easy victories now. She wanted to be certain of what she desired before she set out in earnest to obtain it. To be sure, Halmer Svenson was a man who made Arthur seem to his wife a clodhopper. Svenson had grace and charm, knowledge of the world outside of Wall Street and the clubs, conversation beyond the Broadway "shows" and the gossip of the 'change, an attitude toward women not quite so brutally primitive as Arthur's, beneath its thin veneer of good manners, had grown to be. If she should so manipulate things as to marry Svenson eventually, she did not anticipate any such a career of ennui as she would now have been suffering as Mrs. Rickert had she been a conventional

and decorous wife, with no one but Arthur for amusement.

She was beginning to be bored, too, by money worries. It was all very well to feel a perverse pleasure in watching Arthur's contortions under suffering of a financial nature, but she suffered somewhat herself, and that was not nearly so amusing. If she ever *did*—"readjust her life" was the phrase she used in thinking the subject over, "marry again" sounding a little too crude for her tastes—she must see to it that there would be none of that strain, that annoyance, to which she had been subjected lately! Why, Marthe had courteously, but firmly, refused to sell her any more tea gowns until she had paid something on her account! And Marthe had a model of her exquisite little figure, so that fitting was almost no trouble to her, and Marthe had the best taste and the most originality of all the importers whom Mrs. Rickert had patronized. Decidedly, if she ever did "readjust her life" it must be on a basis which would permit her the expenditures proper to her station. Barbara always thought of her station as exalted, measuring it, perhaps, by her appreciation of her own charms. She set afoot a few careless inquiries concerning Captain Svenson's financial status, and was much relieved to find that he possessed an uncle, who had settled in this country long before, and whose reassuring title through the northwestern United States was "Forest King Svenson"—a great lumber prince, in fact, whose heir Captain Svenson was.

She and her captain had an engagement one morning to paddle on the Briarway, the meandering stream which curves between the hills beyond Oakdale. It seemed wise to Barbara, however, not to keep her engagement. She, as well as he, knew the value of withdrawal, and the fatal effect of too great security. So she telephoned to the club, at which he was staying, that she couldn't go, after all; and then she lifted a certain callow boy at the college to the seventh heaven of bliss by telephoning him, and asking him to

take her canoeing. It was likely that Captain Svenson would hear of this—indeed, she intended that he should hear of it. But it would reestablish her in a position of leadership over him; he had been far too attentive to Lady Hawthornden. Barbara half laughed to find that she was suddenly bitterly censorious of Rose, and was thinking of her light conduct as a reproach to the married sisterhood. She had moments of honesty in dealing with herself in the strict seclusion of her room, and it amused her to find that she was upholding the banner of married decorum.

On the river that forenoon, however, she saw a sight to crystallize all the vagrant impulses and the deeper passions she had had for Halmer Svenson, into one glowing and determined purpose. That sight was no other than he, himself, with Rose, Lady Hawthornden, paddling along beneath the drooping willows, that in places almost met across the stream. He had immediately availed himself of her excuse, to go and seek Rose. He was obviously enjoying the sprightly lady's talk and laughter. The canoes passed, and hands were waved and greetings called, and the senior from the college, who was feeling himself a great man of the world, and rather a devil of a fellow, because he was out with the renowned—even the notorious—Mrs. Rickert, when he should have been in chemical laboratory, wondered why the temperature of the day changed so suddenly.

Barbara went home from the expedition with her mind made up. Halmer Svenson should declare unmistakably what were the stakes for which he was playing. If his idea was an intrigue, according to the French school, she had no intention of obliging him. If, however, he was sufficiently in love with her to want her to divorce her



"The price of a bullet will be no more on Saturday than to-morrow."

husband and to marry him, that was another question. She thought, with a cool deliberation, that was a curious intellectual accompaniment to her eager, insatiable desire for sensations. When he came, late in the afternoon, as they had arranged when she was breaking her canoeing engagement in the morning, her mind was quite made up.

He came to the tryst with some trepidation, some ardor, some amusement. He had met no woman for years who could stir his pulses as this one did; there were times when, beneath all his suave and debonair manner, the primitive desire to seize her, to hold her against the world, to possess her for his own, burned fiercely in him. Her husband he despised. Moral code he had none, beyond the code of agreeable cosmopolitan good breeding. But

she made him, at times, a savage, with the savage desire for sole proprietorship. In those moments, the thought of a mere affair, of a flirtation, whatever its degree of violence, did not satisfy him. He had been absurdly angry when he had beheld her with that downy-lipped cub on the river in the morning. Thus, he denominated the young man, who was even then studying his own reflection in the mirror, and wondering if he had impressed the sparkling Mrs. Rickert with his extreme cynicism. On the whole, Barbara came to the meeting with steadier nerves and a clearer perception of what she wanted than Svenson.

She managed the interview incisively and well. The bantering, under the guise of which he managed to reveal not a little real jealousy, she quickly converted into honest upbraiding and anger. From that to the definition of the meaning of his jealousy was but a step. Ah, he loved her, would not be played with, demanded her love in return! She looked at him steadily.

"You realize that I am not a European fine lady?" she said to him finally.

"I realize that you are an American fine lady, and that, as such, you coquette to the limit, and then expect to convert the man on whom you have been exercising your wiles into an elderly tabby cat! But I am not that kind of a man. It's all or nothing with me."

"And it's all or nothing with me," she replied steadily, though a wild-rose color burned on her face. She was making her last throw. "You know that I care." Her breath came flutteringly. "But it's all or nothing—and not in your meaning. It's the whole of your life, it's your name—it's everything! Or nothing at all!"

"It's everything, then!" he cried drunkenly.

He caught her to him, and sealed the unholy contract with kisses that almost bruised her soft face. The violence of his emotion half frightened her. But triumph ran through her veins like quicksilver. When he left her that afternoon, she had agreed to tell Ar-

thur that she intended to leave him, intended to take up her residence in a Western State, and to divorce him. Then she would marry Svenson.

Arthur was bloodshot and disheveled when he came home that evening. There were great circles of consuming anxiety beneath his harassed eyes, his fingers twitched, his forehead was knotted. She was too intent upon her own plans to observe him critically; but even her indifferent, contemptuous, and cruel eyes could not fail to see some signs of terrible strain and agitation upon him. For a second, she paused, to consider whether or not it would be dangerous to tell him, cold-bloodedly, her determination. But she had courage of sorts, and she had a boundless scorn for her husband. She decided to speak, and speak then.

She did it. He looked at her through her little speech, with snarling lips, and a defeated, wild look in his eyes. But when she had succinctly stated her plan, he only laughed—a horrid laugh that chilled her with a certain maniacal shrillness.

"Go ahead!" he said. "Go ahead. I sha'n't mind. I shall be in State's prison, where I could not enjoy your distinguished society, anyway—your tender, comforting presence!"

"What are you talking about?" She was startled in spite of herself.

"I mean that I have stolen three hundred shares of Carson Preferred, the property of Mrs. Augusta Van Cott, left with Crothers, Rickert and Crothers, as security for a twenty-thousand-dollar loan; that I sold them for fifty-four thousand dollars, and that she wants them back."

"Can't anything be done?"

"Can you give me fifty-four thousand dollars? Or, rather, fifty-six thousand two hundred dollars, for they're at one hundred and eighty-four, and I cannot buy them back for less. Or would Svenson be willing to pay that for you?" He eyed her with the stark insolence of despair. She grew hot with anger.

"You might borrow from the Hiltons," she retorted.

"No, I mightn't. And a bullet is cheaper in the long run. My mother will take care of Winifred. God, what a heartless creature you are, Barbara! Poor Winnie!"

"Don't talk nonsense! There isn't time for it. See here—this is too ugly, too awful. I always knew you—no matter about that, either. There isn't time for it. And don't talk that rot about suicide. You haven't the nerve; and, anyway, I shan't have it! I won't! Understand, I won't have my new life smeared with talk about my driving you to suicide! I will not! To-morrow I shall see what I can do for you—only understand, it does not mean the slightest change in my final plans."

"There's nothing you can do," Arthur told her. "We've exhausted all our private borrowing capacity, and my name on paper wouldn't be worth a cent."

"I shall see what I can do," she repeated firmly.

"See here, Bab, there's one thing I won't have," broke in Arthur, in a new tone, suddenly holding his head erect. "I won't take one damned cent from Svenson. I prefer prison to that. He can't buy you from me. I make you over as a free gift, a tribute of admiring regard, without money and without price!"

He ended with a brutal laugh, the momentary manliness of his look dissolving in a sneer. Then he turned and left her, and Barbara sat pondering for an hour.

CHAPTER VI.

Arthur Rickert had just been explaining to Mrs. Van Cott, over the telephone, that her certificates had been removed from his safe to the safe in the elder Mr. Crothers' office, and that Mr. Crothers was in Hot Springs, with the combination of the safe, most unfortunately, with him, and with his personal secretary, who had just gone to join him, but who was to return in two days, when Lester Hilton's card was brought to him. He was ashen pale, and the cold dew of soul-consuming

anxiety was on his forehead after his talk with the insistent widow. Before he gave the word for Lester's admittance, he ran his hand over his brow and hair, and leaned back, with closed eyes and gasping lips, like a man struggling for breath. The young clerk from the outer office eyed him with interest not unmingled with suspicion.

"It's all right. Send him in," said Arthur, recovering himself. And, when the youth had left the room, he took a swift pull at a brandy flask, kept in a pigeonhole of his desk. It was a silver trinket that Barbara had given him. He laughed shortly, recalling the fact.

Lester began the interview with a slightly embarrassed air. He was no sort of a financier, he reminded Arthur, but a mere inventor, who had had remarkably good fortune. His investments were turning out pretty well, too, as Rickert knew—and yet, and yet—well, briefly, he needed to negotiate a short-time loan.

"It's not for exactly a speculative purpose," he told Rickert, feeling, meantime, a strange mingling of compunction and joy in the broker's look. "But—I've got to have sixty thousand dollars for a few days. I needn't tell you why."

"Not in the least," agreed Arthur. "You've only got to name your security. We can negotiate the loan for you all right."

"How would a thousand shares of the H. S. S. do?"

"Perfectly, I should say. They're quoted at a hundred and twenty-five, and they've been rising steadily ever since you put the device on the market. They're subject to very few fluctuations. The P. W. and P. would have to go bankrupt to cause them to drop much—unless we should have a panic, and the signs don't point that way. You hold a good deal of stock in the Hilton Safety Signal Company, don't you?"

"Oh, a fairish bunch. Well, if those will do, will you go ahead and arrange the matter?"

Arthur signified that he would, and the result was that, before bank closing

that afternoon, Lester had his sixty thousand dollars, and Arthur had a thousand shares of the Hilton Safety Signal stock.

The desperate man sat in his office late that evening, thinking, thinking, thinking. Barbara had telephoned him once during the day that she had failed utterly in an attempt to get a large loan from her brother, but that she was still bending her energies toward the solution of his difficulties. He had hung up the receiver after that interview, with a short laugh.

He was a gambler. The poison of chance-taking was in his veins. He lifted his head from his hands, and looked about the still office, shadowed everywhere, save where his stenographer's green electric globe gleamed over her neatly closed desk.

"It's been offered me, a chance!" he said. "I'm going to take it. If it fails—it fails! But I'd be a fool not to take it. I can buy back that woman's stock, and send her her damned certificates, and I can pay some other things; or, better still, I'll put the balance on Louisiana Cotton—that's still climbing. I'll clear enough on that to pay this fellow back before the week is out. If it all fails, why, I'm no worse off than I am now. The term for sixty thousand dollars' worth of stealing will be no shorter than for a hundred and twenty. And the price of a bullet will be no more on Saturday than to-morrow. I'll do it. By the eternal, I'll do it!"

He took another long pull at Barbara's flask. He didn't think of her this time. Then he arose and went out to dinner with the old light in his sunken eyes, the old buoyancy in his tread. He put up at the University Club overnight, and played bridge, winning a few dollars. It seemed to him such a good omen for the enterprise on which he was about to embark that he went to bed and slept soundly for the first time in a month. He even dreamed of Winnie; and, remembering it in the morning, considered that yet another good omen. Certainly those powers which ruled the universe

would not permit Arthur Rickert to be utterly undone. That happened to other men—not to him!

Two hours after the opening of the exchange, he had negotiated a large loan, almost for its selling value, on Lester's stock, through the Ramseys. It was understood between them that the loan might be made into a sale if he failed to redeem the stock in two days—a desperate chance, but he took it. In another fifteen minutes he had bought three hundred shares of Carson Preferred, and within an hour Mrs. Van Cott's affair was concluded. He began speculating in Louisiana Cotton, and at the close of the day, after three reversals of luck, he was thousands poorer than he had begun the day. That the money he had lost was not his own, but Lester Hilton's, troubled him less in the beginning than the actual loss. When he recalled that the squandered thousands were supposed to be securely locked away in the vaults of the Maiden Lane Trust Company, where Crothers, Rickert and Crothers kept many valuables, the despair of the past weeks gripped him again. But he forced himself to remember that, at the very moment when he had feared the Van Cott speculation must become known, his gambler's providence had raised up Lester Hilton to save him; and he argued desperately that he must be saved yet again. It was the other men whose daring schemes miscarried, the other men out of whose follies the gods forged thunderbolts for their destruction, the other men for whom were prison stripes or the crash of a final bullet. Such things were not for him, not for Arthur Rickert!

He went out to Oakdale that evening, and Barbara, who had a distaste for the complicating of her own plans with any failure or doom of his—why, she could not have told—was relieved at his changed aspect.

"You're out of your difficulties?" she asked him, when the servants had left them alone in the dining room. It was the first evening in months when they had dined alone together.

"For the time, yes."

"Then—I won't mince matters—I shall start at once for Reno."

"You will doubtless find many congenial friends in that charming resort," he answered sneeringly. Then his face changed. "How about Winnie, Barbara?"

Barbara looked at him curiously. The man would never cease to be a puzzle to her. Absorbed as he had seemed in the most materialistic of pursuits—in stock gambling, in building, in eating, drinking, choosing fine raiment, cajoling the common women among whom he seemed finally to have come to his true social level, he nevertheless had an emotion, a sensitiveness, which was of an unknown language to her. It was not even as if Winnie were a child of whom a vain father might be proud. She had the good looks of neither of her parents; she was awkward, ill-nourished looking. In her manners she varied between a trying shyness—the shyness of the suspicious rustic, unaccustomed to human intercourse—and the pertness of a miniature shopgirl. Her mother ascribed these shortcomings to natural depravity, or natural inaptitude on the part of the little girl, and no child culturist in the land could have persuaded her that Winnie was the almost inevitable product of maternal neglect and over-association with servants. And yet, little pride as their offspring did either of them, Arthur seemed concerned about her.

"We won't quarrel about Winnie, I imagine," she replied curtly, annoyed, she could not tell why, with the introduction of the subject. "You would prefer that she should not remain with me?"

"You mean that you and Svenson won't want her?" The snarl on Arthur's lips was like that of some animal.

"My dear Arthur, why try to blink facts out of existence? If I secure a divorce from you for the purpose—with the expectation of marrying Captain Svenson, is it not much more natural that you should remain your daughter's guardian than that another

man should assume that burden? Of course, I should want to have access to her at times, and to have her visit me at times. Good heavens, why do you drag in Winnie, as though she made a barrier to our doing what we want to do, or as though a child introduced an unheard-of complication into such an arrangement as we are about to make? Half the children in society——"

"Yes, I know," Arthur nodded gloomily. "Poor little kids! Poor little Winnie!"

"I tell you what you'd better do," said Barbara daringly. "You'd better use your freedom to make up to Amy Hilton. She is just the material to mould into an admirable stepmamma!"

Arthur looked at her, with a heavy frown for a few seconds.

"And to think, by gad," he said, "that men are considered coarser, less refined, than women!"

CHAPTER VII.

"To Greenland!"

It was Amy who uttered the exclamation. It was Thomas Hackett whose previous remark had led to it.

"Yes. Why not?" asked the professor. "It would certainly be cool for a summer trip. I've an interest in the North. And—it's away from people."

"What quarrel have you with people, Mr. Hackett?" demanded Rose, who was installed behind the tea table in the long drawing-room of the Hilton house.

"I can't define it, but I have one."

"I know what Hackett's grouch is," declared Ned Hilton. "He wants to go to Greenland to escape Miss Dwyer. She's hot on his trail. All Oakdale is talking about it. She's determined to marry him——"

"What? Herself?" giggled Rose.

"To marry him off. She never catches sight of him in the distance without at once bearing down on him, and suggesting a new bride for him. She has got his age down to hours, and she is an ever-present voice, reminding him that youth is not per-

petual. I heard her yesterday, when I was crossing the hall at the club, after a foursome with——"

"Oh, tell it straight, Neddy, and do not give us your golf score as a preliminary," entreated Rose.

"Well, then, I heard her yesterday, saying to him: 'There's nothing so ridiculous and pitiful and contemptible on the face of God's earth as an old bachelor, Thomas Hackett, and that's what you'll be in a mighty short time. I know when you were born; didn't I see your mother five days after? Why don't you marry Mrs. Bentley's Dora?'"

"And what did Thomas Hackett say?" inquired Rose, with deep enjoyment, while the others laughed.

"Oh, I didn't want to eavesdrop, and

I only heard a deprecating murmur to the effect that Dora Bentley wouldn't have him, even if——"

"Let us see, Miss Dwyer herself is about sixty, isn't she? Did she advance any reason why an old bachelor was so much more grotesque a creature than an old maid?" It was Amy who asked the question.

"Of course, Miss Dwyer seldom troubles herself to give reasons," replied Mr. Hackett, "but I did think to suggest to her mind—most delicately—the question you have just put, Miss Amy. And the answer was, that there was all the difference between the tragedy of the unattainable and the ridiculous comedy of the ungrasped. If any of you can make sense out of that, go ahead!"

No one seemed to feel like trying to elucidate the Delphic utterances of Oakdale's sibyl, and in a few minutes Rose, deserting her post behind the samovar, went out on the lawn with Ned, and Amy was left alone with Thomas Hackett.

"Greenland isn't all," he announced. "I waited to tell you alone. I have a very good call from the School of Mines at the University of Colorado. I think I have decided to go." His voice was low, his eyes averted from her face.

"Is it so good as that?" Amy asked. "So good as to make it worth your while to give up all the associations of your life, your friends, your old home?"

"It is my chance of escape from a position I find too hard to bear," he replied. And now he looked at her directly. She flushed.

"You mean?"

"I mean that I can't live in your neighborhood without being wounded a hundred times a day by something that reminds me of your



"I'm going to have you arrested, Rickert!"

nearness and your utter inaccessibility. My very windows look on your roof. I see your brothers on the train, in the village, at the club—everywhere. I hear your name. When I asked you a year ago to marry me, and you refused, I thought I could control my emotions merely by staying away from you. After a while, I became so much the master of my feelings that I deluded myself into thinking I had overcome my love. I permitted myself to see you again—and I am in a worse case than ever, my dear. I'm not a boy, to get over it at sight of some new face—Dora Bentley's, or the next one's. I'm a man, thirty-six. I love you, and I can't live where everything speaks of you, without too much suffering."

"Oh, don't! Please don't!" cried Amy brokenly. "I don't know what to say——"

"My dear, you said all that you had to say to me a year ago."

"No—that is, I don't know. I can't tell. I know the year without you was a horrid one to me. It was the first one I recall since I was grown up when I haven't seen you constantly at need—and when haven't I needed you? When my dear father left us, what should I have done without you and your mother? When—that—happened, what should I have done without your mother and sister; it was when you were at Heidelberg. It's been lonely and dreadful, getting on without you all this past year, but—I don't know. I think it has gone out of me to care again. If it had not, I am sure I must needs——"

"Care for me? Ah, no, it doesn't follow. But I think I must accept that call, Amy. You cannot hold out any hope to me that by and by—for I could wait years and years, and live on just a hope—you might come to care for me; might come to dismiss him from your mind utterly. For that is what it means, Amy, whether you admit it to yourself or not. Somehow, that man still has a hold on you; you wouldn't be your exquisite, loyal, true self otherwise, I suppose. Somehow, though you

may not define it, and may not even know it, your heart has excused him, has ascribed his treachery to some other cause than his own innate corruptness. You pity him because his faithlessness, which you may think a momentary madness, has linked him with a woman hard, cruel, coarse, who makes his life an expiation of his folly in falling a victim to her. It's because you have not driven him utterly from your heart, Amy, that you can admit no one else. It is not because the springs of feeling are dried up within you. The idea! In you! In you, the kindest, tenderest——"

She looked at him out of sombre eyes, her face pale, her forehead knitted in some pain of uncertainty.

"Oh, I don't pretend to understand myself," she cried. "All that there is of me now resents his presence, feels outraged that I must force myself to see him, to be civil to her! To remember how I was hurt, how willfully and completely, hurts me yet; I am crucified afresh when I remember. And when I see those to whom I am dear treating him as they would treat any other man, I feel a surge of rebellion against the civilization that kept them from killing him, when he dared to subject me to such humiliation! Never before have I talked like this to any human being."

"Thank you for that!"

"But the last few days have filled me with the thoughts of them—the Rickerts—and of our relations to them. But along with that primitive rage of a hurt thing, there goes something else. Why, sometimes"—her voice softened and fell almost to a whisper—"sometimes, do you know, even yet, I have dreams of—the old time? I mean real dreams, the ones that come in sleep. I am a girl again, and he is the bright, compelling, gay presence of my girlhood! And then, I am glad that I went unrevenged; I am pitiful. I seek excuses for the inexcusable thing he did. Oh, I tell you I do not understand myself at all. I only know that there is not another person on the earth besides you to whom I could

have said this. And I couldn't have said it to you until now, close as I have always felt to you. I don't know—I don't understand."

Thomas Hackett lifted her hand to his lips.

"I think," he said, "that I shall reject the flattering offer of the School of Mines!"

Amy looked at him, in rosy dismay: "You don't mean that you think that I—" she began.

"I think," he replied, with a triumph he could not keep out of his tones and looks, "that I am more to you than any other actual man. And I trust to kind Heaven to make me more to you than any midnight dreams. Oh, Amy, dear, I feel a perfect assurance that you are going to grow up, yet! That you are going to put away the girl's vapors—don't look at me like that, or I shall forget that it's all in the future. All that I mean, Miss Hilton, is that I quite agree with you; it would be too great a wrench to leave Oakdale for Boulder, Colorado."

He departed abruptly, with no more ceremonious leave-taking, and Amy sat where he had left her, with a slight color on her pale cheeks, a slight fright in her wide eyes, and a slight pounding at her heart.

"He's gone crazy!" she told herself finally, with decision, as she rose to go to her room. But when she reached it, instead of beginning at once to dress for dinner, as her timely intention had been, she sank down on a window seat, and looked unseeing out into the fresh green of a chestnut tree in the yard.

"I never showed so much of my feeling before—that's true," she admitted. "But that doesn't mean anything! That doesn't mean anything!"

And then she smiled, as she heard Rose come into the house, singing.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Selling at a hundred and thirty-five points since opening hour? Nonsense, man! H. S. S. isn't a speculative stock—it isn't subject to such fluctuations."

Arthur Rickert spoke sharply to Thaddeus Green, who had just brought him news from the floor of the exchange.

"I know that it never has been. That is what interested me in this rise this morning. There was a bid for a thousand shares at one hundred and twenty-six—it was a hundred and twenty-five at closing time yesterday, and it hasn't varied until to-day more than an eighth of a point at a time for a year. That was what interested me. In an hour it had gone up to a hundred and thirty. Some one seems determined to get control of all of it."

Arthur moistened his dry lips.

"Pity our fellow townsman, the young Hilton inventor, hasn't possession of his thousand shares to-day; he could turn a tidy penny on them."

"It is a pity," replied Thaddeus Green.

He took from Arthur's desk some papers, and stepped silently out into the hall. With trembling hand, Arthur caught up the telephone receiver. He asked for Ramsey and Company. In the three seconds before he was connected with them, he swore twice at Central for her slowness. When, finally, he was in communication with the member of the firm for whom he had asked, his voice and hands were both shaking.

"Ramsey," he asked, "who is it that's buying H. S. S.?"

"Some humanitarian," was the light reply. "He's doing it, whoever he is, through Whittier and Wordsworth."

"Ah!" Arthur's voice was trembling. "If the thousand shares I put up with the Maiden Lane Trust were only in circulation now, there'd be some one making money—a little—wouldn't there?"

"What do you mean?" The query was snapped at him.

"I mean there's no chance of their getting on the market, is there? I mean you people regard them as security for money loaned to me, and not by any chance as something sold to you?"

"You're mixing us with the Maiden Lane Trust now, Rickert," said the

suave voice at the other end of the wire.

"Oh, stow that rot!" cried Arthur vulgarly and impatiently. "Don't I know that you and your brothers are behind those figureheads in the trust company? But, answer me—you're holding my securities, not speculating in them?"

"My dear fellow, granting for the sake of argument that my brother and I are the Maiden Lane Trust, you know that if we should appropriate your property for any purpose whatever you could have us arrested for grand larceny. You don't suppose we'd take risks of that sort—even if we weren't high-minded Christian gentlemen. Say, Arthur, what's on your nerves, anyway? What has put this creepy notion of grand larceny into your mind? Your securities are all safe, believe me."

The voice ceased, and there was the click of a receiver hung up.

"He was laughing at me, laughing! What the devil did he mean by it? And by his reference to grand larceny? Of course, the securities are there, in the vaults—and God knows where I am going to get money enough to get them out when Lester Hilton calls them in! But——"

There came an interruption—a dozen interruptions. But through them all, the undercurrent of his thoughts was Lester's stock and the unaccountable rise in it. What had created the demand? Why, all the major part of it was held by persons directly interested in the manufacture or the use of the Hilton Safety Signal! It was no speculative stock, as he had said to Green. What did it all mean?

He was slamming his door upon all such perplexities at three o'clock, and was making for the outer air, when he encountered Lester in the private corridor outside his office. A cold chill struck to his heart. In the younger man's eyes were malevolence and triumph.

"Want to see me?" he asked, with exaggerated ease and airiness. "Sorry, old fellow, but I'm off to Ardsley, to

make arrangements with my mother to take care of Winnie—my little girl, you know. I don't suppose it will surprise you to hear that Mrs. Rickert and I are separating. It will be in the papers in a few days that she has taken up her residence in Reno, for the usual purpose."

It was a desperate man's chatter. He would have kept on for hours, revealing the innermost secrets of his soul, could he by that means have delayed the question that he saw poised for flight upon young Hilton's lips. He threw the hideous bit of his family life to Lester, as the wolf-tracked Russian throws his child to his pursuers in his last insanity of ignoble terror.

"Will you come back into your office, please, and tell me what you have done with my stock?" was Lester's only reply. Arthur stood, tall, erect, handsome, and defiant for a moment.

"You'd better come," said Lester softly. "You don't want to have a scene in the street."

The stricken man shrugged his shoulders.

"Since my family affairs must wait upon your importunities," he said, with sneering courtesy, and opened the door.

To the stenographer, tapping out the day's correspondence in the outer vestibule of the sanctum, he spoke, bidding her take the rest of the afternoon off.

While the girl could be heard moving about, putting on her hat, closing her desk, the two men waited silently in the inner room. But when the outer door had closed behind her, Lester leaped, figuratively, upon his adversary.

"I shan't waste time pretending not to think you a thief," he began. "I know exactly where every share of H. S. S. stock is held at the present moment. And I know that I hold the thousand shares given to you as security for a loan of sixty thousand dollars. Do you care to explain how it happened to be on the market—that stock?"

"When you have given me the slightest proof that it has been on the mar-

ket," replied Arthur. He made up his mind to try to brazen it out. He would put the blame upon the Ramseys, upon the Maiden Lane Trust people. He would do anything—anything—

"The proof, to my mind, is in the fact that I bought it to-day for one hundred and thirty-two and a half a share."

"My dear fellow, you're too innocent to play the Wall Street game. Some one has buncoed you into buying what he didn't have to sell. Some one has promised to deliver that amount of stock—your stock, you think, by your careful arithmetical calculations—and you consider it delivered. Many a broker has come to grief on such a deal as that," he finished sagely.

"As it happens, I hold the stock certificates in my own possession—the identical ones left with you as security. Every number is there. You might as well drop it, Rickert. You might as well own up, and confess yourself a thief."

"If what you say is true, and is not the crazy raving of a man who is angry because he has had to pay too much for a purchase, I can't explain it at all. Your securities were offered for your loan to the Maiden Lane Trust—"

"You told me the loan came from this firm. You communicated over the long-distance with Mr. Crothers. It was the firm's—this firm's—check that was given me. It was only the Maiden Lane vaults of which I heard anything!"

"All a mere matter of form. As a matter of fact, Crothers discovered that he couldn't advance the sum you wanted—sixty thousand, wasn't it?" Arthur was filled with admiration of his own easy manner. As he spoke, he could almost persuade himself that he was telling the truth. Surely, he could persuade Lester Hilton, that bade in finance, that he was.

"It was sixty thousand."

"And bade me go ahead and negotiate the loan with any of the banks where we do business. I got the most advantageous terms from the Maiden Lane Trust, and put up your certificates

there. If you've got them now—if you bought them, as you say you did, there's some crooked work somewhere!"

He said the words with a sonorous conviction. Altogether absorbed in his own histrionic effort, self-hypnotized, as it were, he did not study Lester's cold, cruel, young face.

"Wasted, every bit of it, Rickert! I know that you went out and raised money on my securities when they had been in your hands a few hours. Do you suppose I come here and call you a thief without knowing—knowing—what I'm saying? I know every step you have taken since those certificates came into your possession. I know how much you got for them. I know what you did with the money. I know what you dropped on Louisiana Cotton. And I'm going to have you arrested and in the Tombs in an hour."

His words penetrated the fog of delusion in which Arthur Rickert had almost succeeded in dulling even his own knowledge of his crime. He stared at the pitiless, clear-cut face out of baffled eyes. Across the stupidity of his mind, that refused to help him with another lie in his great need, there passed the reflection that Lester looked a little like Amy. Only Amy, he found himself gravely assuring himself, as though the Hilton physiognomic characteristics were up for consideration, never looked pitiless.

When he had finished his foolish, irrelevant thinking, he turned around on the swivel chair before his desk, and looked out at the small section of sky visible about the high roofs of the crowding office buildings.

"If it weren't for Winnie," he remarked conversationally, although a trifle apathetically, "I think it would be rather a relief—the Tombs."

Lester stared at him, the conviction that Rickert was going mad strong within him.

"But there is Winnie, you know," he informed the father succinctly. "I suppose you lost sight of that fact when you were stealing my property. But don't lose sight of it again."

A spasm of pain, perhaps of anger, distorted the other's features for a minute.

"Do you mind telling me," he asked suddenly, "whether it was you who ran the price of H. S. S. up to a hundred and thirty-two and a half this morning?"

"It was."

"Why?"

"That was stupid, I admit. But I am dazed, I think—I haven't been sleeping well, I haven't been resting, I have been frightfully worried."

The man spoke now more like a human being and less like some dull automaton. Consciousness—an appreciation of his position—seemed to surge back upon him. The telephone on his desk rang. He answered, concentrat-



"Oh Lester, Lester!" she cried.

"To brand you as a thief."

"Me? What had you against me?" Then, suddenly, he remembered, and a dull flush struggled through his pallor.

"Think back ten years, and you'll know what I have against you, you shallow, contemptible creature! Great God, to think of a man to whom treachery is so natural that he forgets the times he has played the traitor! But I didn't forget!"

ing his mind upon the question and reply. When he hung up the receiver again, the apathy had quite vanished.

"I don't know what's been the matter with me, Hilton, the last few minutes; I feel as though I had been talking in my sleep. Great heavens, man, you aren't going to make a hideous splurge over what is a common enough affair in financial circles! I can return you the money you paid out to buy back your own stock; and you want

to remember that you came to me as a man in need, and that you deceived me throughout the whole transaction. You haven't been honest yourself. And it is the merest commonplace of such a transaction that your certificates should have gotten back on the market. I stand ready to make good—you won't risk the horrible scandal—my people—your own! Think what a story will be dragged up, if you let this get out!"

"My family has nothing to hide."

"Talk—cheap talk, my boy! No woman—no decent woman—can stand being talked about. The other kind fatten on it—it's a curious thing! But take it from me—I know women better than you do—no nice woman is any the better off for having her poor little tragedies and romances ventilated through the newspapers. And when you—you, a Hilton, have me, Arthur Rickert, arrested, you can be sure that our interrelations from the time of the ark will be aired. It isn't as if I couldn't raise the money—great God, man, they'll let me off in court when they learn I'm ready to pay. Besides—it won't be so easy a job. Here, to you, I'm making no pretenses—I'm admitting all you suspect. But, understand that when we two leave this room, unless we leave it under a flag of truce, it becomes you alone against the Ramseys, the Maiden Lane Trust, and me. It's millions against you. Those fellows have done me dirt, and they'll come into this with me, or there'll be trouble. And if they come in with me, you'll have small chance of recovery. And all the old story raked up, and you may be sure that the nasty-minded world will say your family had serious wrongs to be avenged if you took such pains to avenge them—more serious than it had dreamed before in its purity! Stop, stop, you! You're choking me!" For Lester, at his innuendoes, had leaped at his throat.

The young man's mind was swift-working as his fingers. He grasped the measure of truth in all that Arthur had said. He longed, with a primitive, savage longing, to pillory his enemy. The unsatisfied passion of years

burned in his veins. Yet he could calm himself enough to appreciate what the dishonored and dishonorable man was saying. Others would be dragged into the fight—probably. The powerful, crooked interests which Rickert had named, and on which he counted so confidently, could probably rob the revenge of some of its fine flavor. The possibility of further humiliation for Amy would have to be faced. Reluctantly, he released his hold upon Rickert's throat.

"It will be the regret of my life, Rickert," he said, "that I didn't go out and horsewhip you through the streets ten years ago, even if I was only a boy and you a man grown! To see you flayed, to see the red welts on your pampered skin, to see the blood flow, to treat you like the animal you are, that would have been the only revenge worth taking on you, the only kind you have any capacity for feeling. However—I'm not going to do it now. Don't look alarmed. You say you can make good your theft." Arthur winced. Lester looked at his watch. "It's half-past three now. I'll give you until half-past five to come to me with the money I paid out for the stock you stole, or with satisfactory proof that I can have it at banking time to-morrow. Arrange with your confederates. You can come to my office. Don't try any funny business. You're watched, and if you try to get away, you'll be nabbed at once. I'll see you at half-past five."

"Yes—damn you!" snarled Arthur.

It had come to him as a gleam of hope, his connection with the Ramseys and the Maiden Lane Trust Company in this matter. If he could intimidate them, if he could persuade them that warrants for their arrest were also out, if he could manage to impose upon them the belief that they had been guilty of larceny as well as he—for he had not sold the stock which he had borrowed; he had only raised money on it, and the two days of grace were not up, and those men were the true thieves who had finally put the certificates out upon the open market—if he could only make them share the

danger with him; then, he felt, he could weather the storm, could raise at least enough money to call Lester Hilton off his trail for a while; could somehow induce his family, though its fortunes were shrunken, to come to his aid, could somehow keep the world from sympathizing with Barbara as a poor, dear girl, horrified to the final point of repugnance by the disclosure of her husband's dishonesty, could somehow manage to pass on a not totally ruined name to Winnie.

Feverishly, he began the work of rallying his support about him. Some garbled version of the true story he telephoned to his father, representing himself as the victim of the Maiden Lane Trust Company's duplicity. He told how urgent was his need. His father listened—he had suffered many pangs of wounded pride in his only son; he was dulled in paternal feeling. And he was not by nature an expansive soul; honor and fair renown were, of course, desirable assets; without them, credit was impossible, and without credit large businesses could not be conducted; but, beyond that, the honor of his name did not poignantly concern him. Besides, he was short of money. All of which he managed to convey to his son over the telephone. But he would see him through to the extent of thirty thousand, he concluded.

Good! The first appeal had been successful, though not so largely so as Arthur had hoped. Let him now get in touch with his confederates. Would a blustering, threatening, outraged tone, or a hail-fellow-well-met, all-in-the-one-boat tone serve him better? He got hold of Ramsey before he had decided the matter to his own satisfaction. And he found that he need not have troubled himself to ponder on the subject. For Ramsey's first words—uttered even before Rickert had suggested the theme on which he had called him up—were those of an honorable gentleman, wounded, angered, utterly shocked, by having been dragged into a compromising position by a rascal. Ramsey had discovered that the certificates were stolen. Ramsey utterly

denied the two-day clause that had been a feature, but only a verbal feature, of Arthur's hypotheccating them. Ramsey cleared his skirts, was prepared to clear the Maiden Lane Trust's, by cold-blooded perjury, if necessary. Arthur was to stand pilloried alone as the man who had adroitly robbed one man, and had deceived an innocent, responsible, and conservative body of financiers into acting as his accomplices with the proceeds of his robbery.

Snarling and cursing, Rickert finally rang off the hopeless conversation, promising Ramsey some definite punishment within a few hours. He had murder in his mind at the moment. Then he tried frantically to remember where else he might try to find a friend. Laughing half madly, wholly cynically, at the notion, he attempted to call up Barbara. It was her maid who answered that madame had gone out in an automobile with Captain Svenson, and had left word that she would not be at home before dinner.

"And, m'sieu," lisped the young person, "I think perhaps I should tell you, I fear that mademoiselle acquires the whooping cough. She——"

"Hell! Send for the doctor!" cried Arthur Rickert, ringing off violently.

At five o'clock, he gave up the frantic, panic-stricken quest for a friend—a friend to the tune of thousands, tens of thousands. He would go to that infernal young beast, and try to browbeat him for another twenty-four hours' grace. He could sell the Oakdale place, if he had time. It was not paid for, to be sure, but the land was his; he could manage somehow, if only—if only he had time. He jammed his hat upon his eyes, and set out for Lester's office.

CHAPTER IX.

Amy had been disturbed and harassed ever since the night of the club dance. She had remembered Miss Dwyer's statements about Lester's transactions with the firm of which Arthur Rickert was a member, and she agreed with the tart old lady that the connection showed bad taste. And her talk

with Thomas Hackett, the new depth of intimacy to which she had come in her acquaintance with him, all combined to make her disturbed, apprehensive, unquiet. To-day, being in town, she resolved to go to Lester's office and have a talk with him. A private talk was almost an impossibility at home, now that Rose kept the house filled with laughter and talk from old friends and new. So she made her way to the river-side workshop in the city.

Lester was not in his office, one of his assistants informed her, but was expected in later. Would she be pleased to enter and wait for him? Amy was so pleased. She was even pleased to intrude upon the innermost of his sanctums, the little sitting room with the couch bed, where he sometimes spent the night. Amy was tired and perplexed. She lay down upon the couch, and in ten still, peaceful minutes forgot her perplexities in sleep.

"She didn't wait, after all, sir," said a clerk from the outer office, after telling Lester of his sister's descent upon him; and Lester, seeing the inner workroom empty, did not go in, but talked over the details of a new elevator device with one of the men in the general workroom. At twenty minutes past five, he went into his private office.

"I'm here to no one but Mr. Rickert," he said.

Punctual to the minute, Arthur arrived, but he needed no words to tell Lester of his failure.

"You haven't got it?" said the young man coldly. "Oh, Lord, man, don't begin the tale of why you haven't got it, or when you will have it, and all that—I'm not interested. I gave you until five-thirty. You said there were others implicated with you. Probably they didn't agree with your estimate of their position. I'm going to have you arrested, Rickert!"

"If you give me the time, I can make good," Arthur insisted. "I am in this hole because of the confounded rascality of the men who sold you your stock. I admit that when it was in

my possession I—borrowed—it for my own necessities. But I only borrowed it. It was they who seized upon it, sold it. I tell you I am innocent of any criminal—"

"Bosh! You're talking the idlest nonsense. You took what didn't belong to you, what was left in your care for a time, and you used it. Borrowed on it, sold it—what's the difference? You stole, I tell you, you stole! You're a common thief, and you'll be branded as such far and wide to-morrow morning."

"Have it your own way. I'm not the first man to get into difficulties because I couldn't get hold of over a hundred thousand dollars in two hours. Time's all I need."

"Time and brains and common honesty and opportunity. Oh, I could tell you a dozen things you need. But I won't waste my own time—"

"You've considered how this will react upon your own people, as well as mine? Upon your—sister, Amy—as well as upon my little girl? I don't make any plea for my wife; she's going to be my wife for so very little longer."

"I've thought over all the rot you talked when I was in your office, and it doesn't bother me! I tell you, Rickert, I've waited for this day, and I'm not going to be cheated out of it by any sensational maundering on your part. I was only a boy, a young shaver, when I vowed that I should, somehow, some time, hold you up to public loathing for the dastardly way you treated—I won't mention her name. And there hasn't been a day or a night since when I have not reiterated my vow. Only lately have I known how it was to be done, but I have always known it was to be done. You should suffer—and not only that, but you should be shamed in public. You should suffer in the only way suffering could be made to penetrate to your soul, if you've got one, through your thick hide. And you're going to, Rickert, you're going to! You'll be shorn of your fascinations pretty effectually when you get out of Sing

Sing. The name Rickert will always carry a bit of a stench with it after to-morrow morning's papers. I was only a child, and children are supposed to forget easily. I've never forgotten! You blind, you miserable, fool, to think that I would have any dealings with you, except for my own purposes! With you, whom I would touch only with tongs—except for my own purposes!"

He had spoken with a concentrated savagery which held the other man silent. His keen, thin, young face had been one blaze of passion, intense, relentless. The other man, watching him dully at first, finally became impersonally interested in the remarkable, unsuspected development of the boy's character. He tried to summon a sneer to answer the youthful outburst, but before he could bring forth the words, the little door in the half-high partition between the room and the inner sanctum opened, and Amy, wide-eyed, horrified, swept toward her brother.

"Oh, Lester, Lester!" she said. It was a low wail of almost infinite grief. Lester sprang to his feet. So did Rickert, and from them both came the cry of "Amy!"

She went to her brother as though she saw him in some deadly peril from which she hurried to rescue him. She went to him as though she beheld him in some great want, and she had abundance for his needs. She put her loving hands upon his arm, she looked eagerly into his face.

"Dearest, dearest brother!" she cried. "Dearest Lester! Tell me that you didn't mean it—what you have been saying! Tell me that your life has not been so hideous as that—has not been a hunger for revenge—a plot for any man's abasement!"

"My dear Amy," said Lester, somewhat impatiently, "this is no place for you. They told me you had gone home. I shouldn't have introduced you to any such unpleasantness, willingly. But since you're here, and have, apparently, overheard some of the story, you may as well hear the rest of it. Technically, this man has stolen securities

I left with him, and has sold them. The reason he did it was because he needed the money, and is a common creature, devoid even of crude commercial honesty. But the reason he had a chance to do it is that I laid the mine, I prepared the situation, I offered the temptation. And he's going to pay the penalty of yielding to it!" he finished, with a visible snapping of his jaws.

"You poor, starved boy!" she said softly. "Nourishing yourself on such thoughts and such ambitions, when there is goodness and forgiveness in the world. I have been a poor sister to you, Lester; I have fulfilled my mother's injunctions badly, if you are a man who could thrive on thoughts of hatred and revenge."

"Amy," cried the other, catching at his chance of respite, "tell him I can pay it, if he only gives me time. All I need——"

"It isn't the dirty money I want, you fool! Isn't that clear yet to your mind? It's to brand you for what you are in the face of all the world!"

"Amy—my little daughter!" Arthur went on desperately.

"Why should she show mercy to your little daughter? What mercy did——"

"Lester!" Amy broke in upon him. She had never let her eyes wander from his face to that of her old lover. All the concentration of her deep regard was for her brother. "Lester, I forbid your doing this thing. You do it in my name—and it is I who forbid it. I will not be a part of the ignoble world. I will not be dragged into strife and wicked hatred. I have forgiven; my life has grown rich in forgiveness and peace. I will not have you drag me into this thing. I will not let you yourself poison the very springs of your existence by such an act."

She looked very commanding as she stood by them, straight and tall, and glowing with a noble fervor.

"My God!" cried the baffled Lester. "You don't mean to tell me that you're still in love with the beast?"

"That remark shows the injury you have been doing your own mind and

soul. You have been stultifying yourself these years, Lester, spiritually. It is for your sake, and for your sake alone, that I insist—that I beg—you to give up this plan!" Her voice broke, her lovely eyes ran over with tears at the last.

"Have your own way!" snapped Lester, accustomed from childhood to yield to her.

And she flung her arms around him, and murmured brokenly that now, now, she was sure of his love for her—surer than even his cherished purpose of all the years could have made her. And then she left them.

Nevertheless, as Arthur Rickert, elated by the turn of affairs, joyful in the terms he was able to make with Lester, went out of the building a half hour afterward, he echoed Lester's fierce ejaculation, with a few changes.

"My God, I believe she is still in love with me! Amy! The wonderful creature! Ah, she is of the unchanging kind." And he recalled Barbara's scoffing advice on the subject.

CHAPTER X.

It was six months later that Arthur Rickert ventured to suggest to Amy his interpretation of her advocacy. Barbara had joined the divorce colony, and it was broadly hinted that the signing of her decree of freedom would be the signal for her reshackling herself with chains more agreeable to her than Arthur's. He had paid Lester back the price of the speculation; his family had rallied to his support when his really desperate condition had been made clear, and his speculations had suddenly become successful instead of disastrous. He had seen by the papers that Lester had gone to Germany, to watch the operation of his safety signal on the first of the German roads to try it. Rose had gone back to her shabby ancestral-by-marriage halls and her children, and Ned was always much away. He summoned all his courage, and invaded the once familiar house.

Amy, star-eyed, obviously ill at ease, apprehensive, stood while he made his opening speeches. Her attitude was, perhaps, not hostile, but neither was it reassuring. He thought it best to plunge into his discourse. He spoke of his debt to her; she studied him with earnest eyes and a waiting expression.

"You owe me no thanks," she told him. "I wished to save my brother, not you."

"You do not understand me; I refer to my old debt, the debt I can never repay; the heart broken by doubts, the love shamed, the years wasted. It is that ancient debt. It—Amy, I want to pay it, with my life! With all the rest of my life!"

She stared at him a full second. Then a horror of comprehension overspread her face. His very good looks were loathsome to her, like beauty overlaid with some disease. She moved toward the bell rope, and at last he understood her.

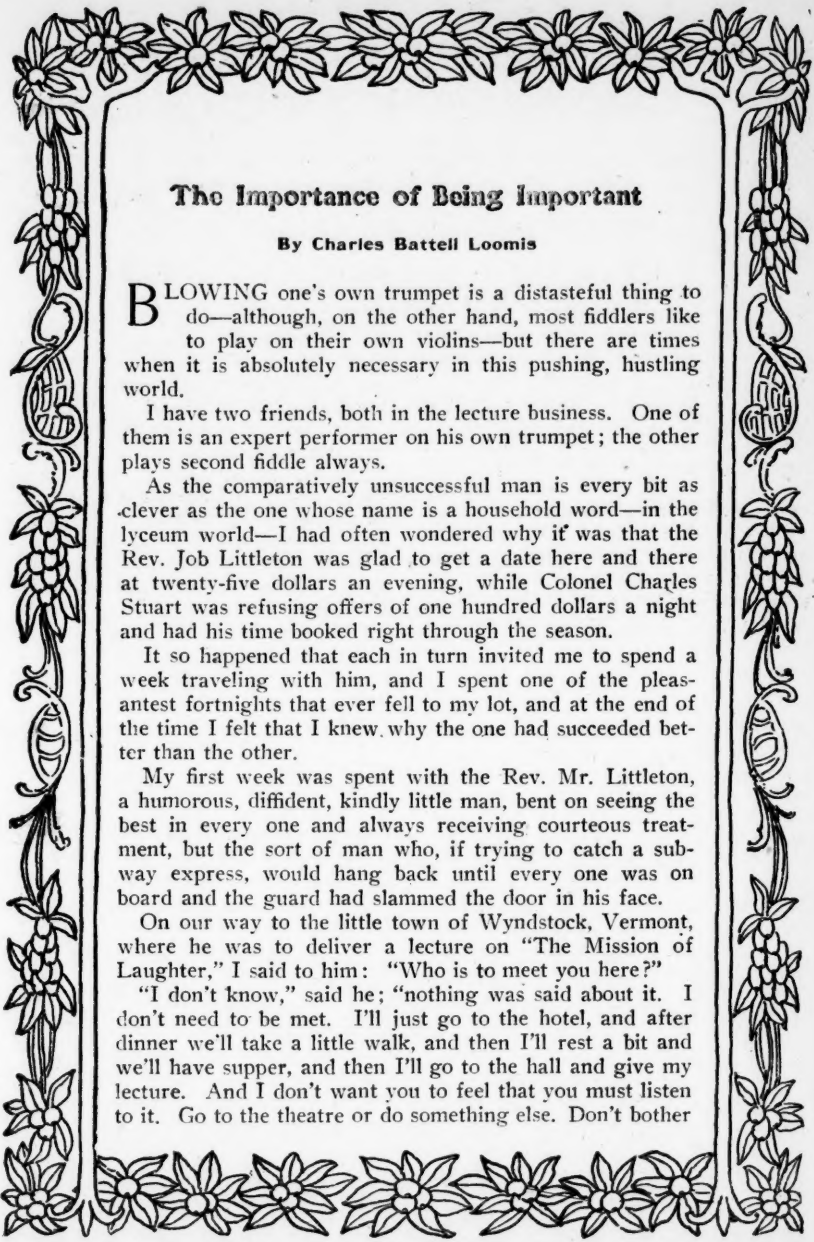
"Will you please go before I ring for my servants to put you out?" she said, and her low voice was vibrant with feeling.

Somehow, he did not know quite how ignominiously, he found the hall and the doorway.

When he had gone, she went to the windows, to open them wide; she had a sense of physical suffocation, of uncleanness. The air he had breathed—the vain fool, devoid of understanding as of honor and honesty—was tainted for her. She flung the sash high, and drew into her lungs deep draughts of the clear outer air.

Into the gate at the moment swung Thomas Hackett—brown and lithe—part of the wholesome, active world she loved. He smiled and waved his hat as he saw her standing there, and she did not know how instinctively her arms were opened, or what meaning there was in her voice, as she cried:

"Oh, I am glad you have come! I am glad!"



The Importance of Being Important

By Charles Battell Loomis

BLOWING one's own trumpet is a distasteful thing to do—although, on the other hand, most fiddlers like to play on their own violins—but there are times when it is absolutely necessary in this pushing, hustling world.

I have two friends, both in the lecture business. One of them is an expert performer on his own trumpet; the other plays second fiddle always.

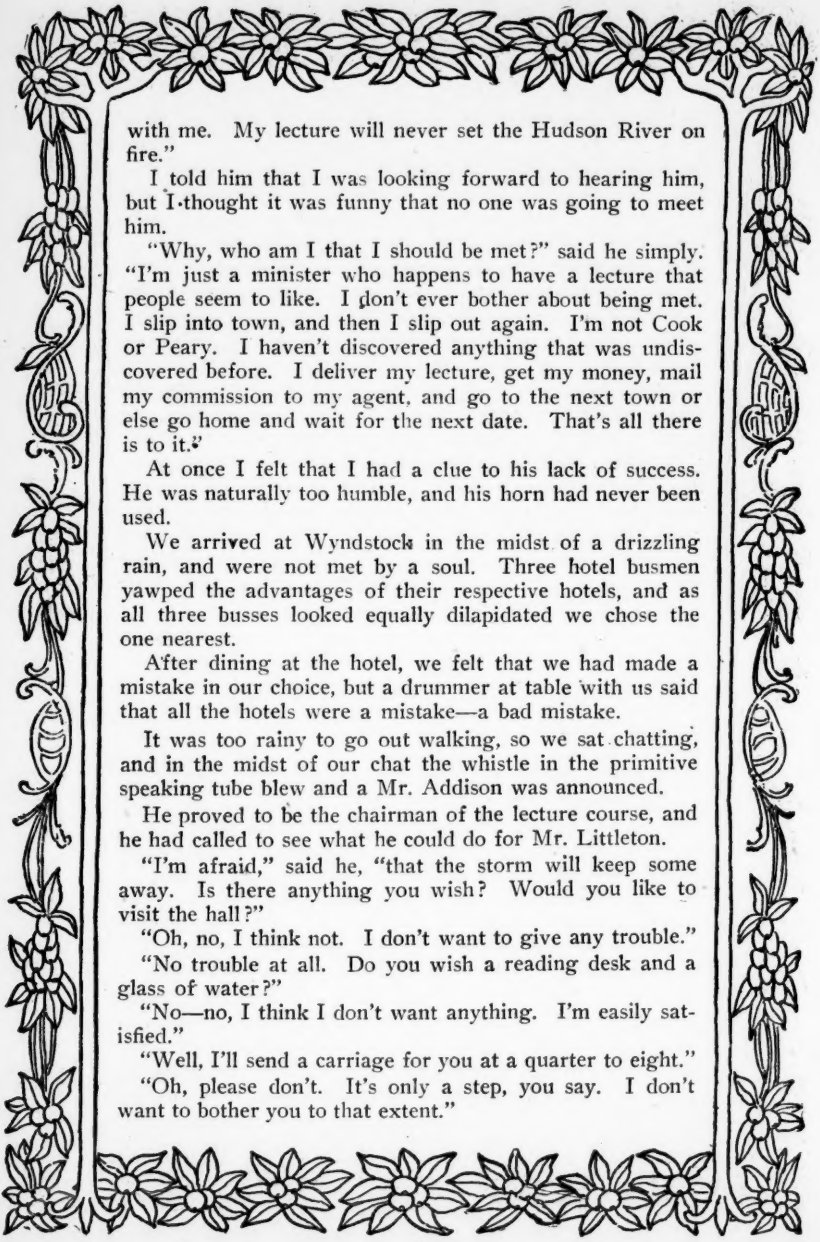
As the comparatively unsuccessful man is every bit as clever as the one whose name is a household word—in the lyceum world—I had often wondered why it was that the Rev. Job Littleton was glad to get a date here and there at twenty-five dollars an evening, while Colonel Charles Stuart was refusing offers of one hundred dollars a night and had his time booked right through the season.

It so happened that each in turn invited me to spend a week traveling with him, and I spent one of the pleasantest fortnights that ever fell to my lot, and at the end of the time I felt that I knew why the one had succeeded better than the other.

My first week was spent with the Rev. Mr. Littleton, a humorous, diffident, kindly little man, bent on seeing the best in every one and always receiving courteous treatment, but the sort of man who, if trying to catch a sub-way express, would hang back until every one was on board and the guard had slammed the door in his face.

On our way to the little town of Wyndstock, Vermont, where he was to deliver a lecture on "The Mission of Laughter," I said to him: "Who is to meet you here?"

"I don't know," said he; "nothing was said about it. I don't need to be met. I'll just go to the hotel, and after dinner we'll take a little walk, and then I'll rest a bit and we'll have supper, and then I'll go to the hall and give my lecture. And I don't want you to feel that you must listen to it. Go to the theatre or do something else. Don't bother

A decorative border of stylized flowers and leaves surrounds the text.

with me. My lecture will never set the Hudson River on fire."

I told him that I was looking forward to hearing him, but I thought it was funny that no one was going to meet him.

"Why, who am I that I should be met?" said he simply. "I'm just a minister who happens to have a lecture that people seem to like. I don't ever bother about being met. I slip into town, and then I slip out again. I'm not Cook or Peary. I haven't discovered anything that was undiscovered before. I deliver my lecture, get my money, mail my commission to my agent, and go to the next town or else go home and wait for the next date. That's all there is to it."

At once I felt that I had a clue to his lack of success. He was naturally too humble, and his horn had never been used.

We arrived at Wyndstock in the midst of a drizzling rain, and were not met by a soul. Three hotel busmen yawped the advantages of their respective hotels, and as all three busses looked equally dilapidated we chose the one nearest.

After dining at the hotel, we felt that we had made a mistake in our choice, but a drummer at table with us said that all the hotels were a mistake—a bad mistake.

It was too rainy to go out walking, so we sat chatting, and in the midst of our chat the whistle in the primitive speaking tube blew and a Mr. Addison was announced.

He proved to be the chairman of the lecture course, and he had called to see what he could do for Mr. Littleton.

"I'm afraid," said he, "that the storm will keep some away. Is there anything you wish? Would you like to visit the hall?"

"Oh, no, I think not. I don't want to give any trouble."

"No trouble at all. Do you wish a reading desk and a glass of water?"

"No—no, I think I don't want anything. I'm easily satisfied."

"Well, I'll send a carriage for you at a quarter to eight."

"Oh, please don't. It's only a step, you say. I don't want to bother you to that extent."

"Doesn't bother me. It's our custom. However, if you prefer to walk—— Oh, and do you wish to be introduced?"

"Oh, dear, no; it won't be necessary. My name is on the tickets. I don't want any fuss and feathers. I'll just 'say my piece,' and then——"

"Oh, yes, *then* you'll have a reception, I suppose. Some of our people want to meet you. By the way, speaking of meeting you, if I had been sure when you were coming I should have been on hand to receive you, and the Rev. Mr. Dexter wished to entertain you. This hotel, you know—well, if you've dined here you *do* know. But in regard to the reception——"

"Oh, if it is just the same to you I believe that I will come away right after the lecture. There's nothing extraordinary about me. They can look at me while I'm lecturing, but I haven't anything to say after it's done. Better not have any reception."

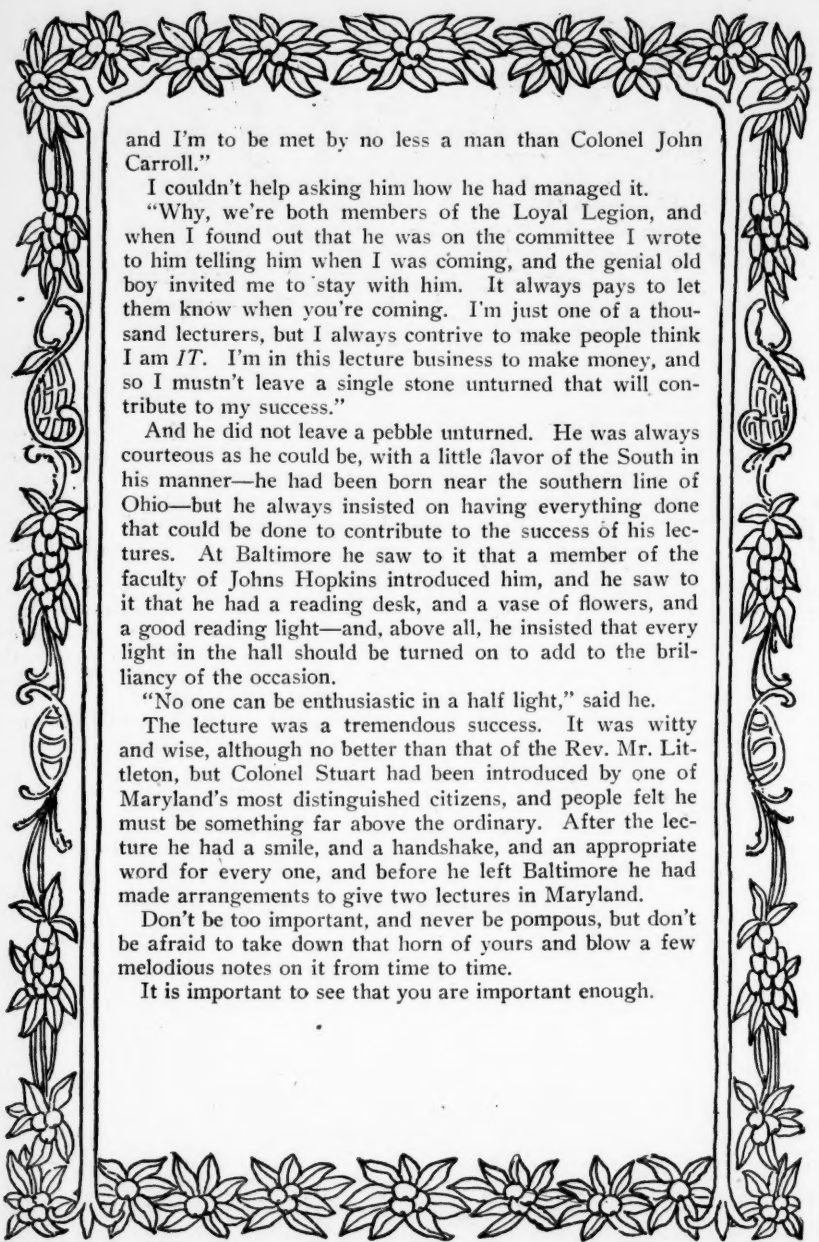
There was a perceptible coolness in the demeanor of Mr. Addison, but he cut the reception out at once, and soon after took his leave.

I now began to understand several things, and before the week was ended I understood more. There was no doubt that Mr. Littleton pleased his audience, but he also wounded the sensibilities of several persons who wished to shake his hand by hurrying off in a frightened way that was detrimental to his own interests.

He not only would not blow his own horn, but he would not let any one else blow it.

Colonel Stuart is a tall man with a white imperial and goatee and a military bearing. His voice has a resonance that might well carry it above the din of battle, and in any company he is a man of mark. He called for me in a taxicab, and, whereas an ordinary car had done for Mr. Littleton and myself, the colonel thought a Pullman none too good for us.

"The better you treat yourself, my boy, the better you think of yourself. That's why I always dress for dinner. Never did it when I was a barefoot boy out in Ohio, but I find that it really pays to do it now. Let's see. Baltimore, Washington, Raleigh. My first date is at Baltimore,



and I'm to be met by no less a man than Colonel John Carroll."

I couldn't help asking him how he had managed it.

"Why, we're both members of the Loyal Legion, and when I found out that he was on the committee I wrote to him telling him when I was coming, and the genial old boy invited me to stay with him. It always pays to let them know when you're coming. I'm just one of a thousand lecturers, but I always contrive to make people think I am *IT*. I'm in this lecture business to make money, and so I mustn't leave a single stone unturned that will contribute to my success."

And he did not leave a pebble unturned. He was always courteous as he could be, with a little flavor of the South in his manner—he had been born near the southern line of Ohio—but he always insisted on having everything done that could be done to contribute to the success of his lectures. At Baltimore he saw to it that a member of the faculty of Johns Hopkins introduced him, and he saw to it that he had a reading desk, and a vase of flowers, and a good reading light—and, above all, he insisted that every light in the hall should be turned on to add to the brilliancy of the occasion.

"No one can be enthusiastic in a half light," said he.

The lecture was a tremendous success. It was witty and wise, although no better than that of the Rev. Mr. Littleton, but Colonel Stuart had been introduced by one of Maryland's most distinguished citizens, and people felt he must be something far above the ordinary. After the lecture he had a smile, and a handshake, and an appropriate word for every one, and before he left Baltimore he had made arrangements to give two lectures in Maryland.

Don't be too important, and never be pompous, but don't be afraid to take down that horn of yours and blow a few melodious notes on it from time to time.

It is important to see that you are important enough.

Where's Ann?



Mary
Heaton
Vorse

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

IT must be confessed that Mrs. Darrow herself was not so concerned in the whereabouts of her offspring as were either her sister, Belle Yates, or her married sister, Mrs. George Ingraham Strong, more familiarly known as Aunt Ann. These two ladies, who, although sisters, were sundered from one another by such a gulf of years that most of their thoughts and doings were fairly unintelligible to the comprehension of both, seemed to Ann herself to be united on one point, and that was, that the whole duty of feminine childhood was to be a "perfect little lady," and if there was one thing in this vale of tears upon which Ann looked with the passion of scorn, it was a young female child to whom this epithet could be applied with justice.

Ann knew your "perfect little ladies." She had spent miserable, prickly, starched afternoons with them playing at games so inane that they drove her to the verge of madness. And, if one only had to play those games without missing something! But, while with hair brushed and tied with ribbons the size of exotic butterflies, and infantile in hue, while the starch in one's little skirts and other little undergarments stuck into one's legs, and one played unsatisfactory games, and listened to inconsequent prattle about unnecessary things, Ann always had the sickening consciousness that out in the real world, in the fresh sunshine, the real business of life was in progress; real games were

being played, and that she, poor child, was missing them.

On the way home from these dreary visits, Ann would be sure to meet some one like Pikey Woodruff, who would call attention to himself by the chivalrous and simple expedient of a sling-shot and a small missile, deftly aimed at some vulnerable part of Ann's person. Then Ann, regardless of starched skirts and blue ribbons, would reach for the nearest stone. These civilities having been exchanged, Pikey, from behind the shelter of an "ellum" tree, would yell out:

"Say, Ann, you'd oughter b'en along; we was down beyond east pond, fishin'; Billy Hale's dog raised a woodchuck."

Sick with disappointment, Ann would reply:

"Aw, go on—woodchuck nuthin'!"

"Cross my heart," Pikey would assert, emerging from behind his shelter. "Say, Ann, yer oughter see him back up against trees and hiss!"

That was the way it was. Every time one had to go and play with girls something entrancing occurred to one's own chosen companions. This was why Ann was wont to give vent to the sentiment that shocked her aunts so much. This sentiment was:

"I hate girls!"

On being pressed for reasons for this wrongmindedness, Ann would reply with simplicity:

"Aw, they make me tired!" And would further add: "They're no fun!"



"Ann streaking along the landscape, her legs like a pair of dividers,

That was it. It was not an intrinsic harm in the creatures themselves that disturbed Ann, it was their inability to play; their silly preoccupation with uninteresting things, and the fact that when playing with them, one had to leave the large, far-faring, bustling world.

You won't believe it credible—Ann couldn't believe her senses about it, and it was always a subject of new wonder to her—but Ann did not count in all her acquaintance one girl who could drop satisfactorily from a branch twenty feet above ground. Not one little girl of Ann's acquaintance ever arrived home from school, her body at right angles over the back of the grocer's cart. Beside this, they were prone to voice the question of Aunt Belle and Aunt Ann:

"What makes you like playing with boys so much, Ann? They're so rough!"

Ann had had to listen to this idiotic sentiment upon the afternoon on which this story opens.

She was proceeding homeward, kicking pebbles before her. For lack of a pocket—the absurd apology of a dress she was wearing, a despicable thing of embroidery and sashes, had none—she had collected a number of stones of convenient size in her handkerchief, and these she shied, from time to time, at the trees on the other side of the street. She threw with a sullen, vicious precision, reflecting on the injustices of life.

Upon Ann's feet were white stockings and shoes; upon Ann's head rested that abomination of desolation, termed by Aunt Belle, "a sweet lingerie hat." Thus arrayed, Ann marched along sturdily; marched with something of a swagger. Her air said: "I'll push in the face of any boy who dares laugh at me." But inside her, her heart was sore with shame, for well she knew that her apparel deserved the derision it would get if any of "the gang" happened to see her.

But that splendid power of bluffing that had served her in so many tight



and fifteen dogs and twenty boys after her."

places caused her to walk through the main streets of the village, instead of sneaking unostentatiously home by air line, through sundry holes in fences and behind barns. In case of onslaught Ann was absolutely defenseless; she hadn't even a dog or two along to sic on anybody—Hetty Mayhew being afraid of dogs, and Hetty Mayhew's mother having an incomprehensible aversion to dogs tracking up her house. In Ann's rebellious heart shame at her ridiculous raiment and bitterness over belonging to the absurd sex that must be so bedizened, strove together.

Her eyes scanned the far streets in search of familiar forms. In such moments her little moist hand clutched a stone firmly, ready to throw at the first sound of derision. Her ears were as alert as a wild thing's for the most far-distant "hoo-hoo" of her people.

It was while passing the Willis' shrubbery that her ear was assailed with suppressed giggles. Instantly Ann was on her hands and knees, and sticking out her head truculently, she hissed:

"Shut up, you silly slop-face, or I'll learn you!"

Lying flat upon their stomachs, screened by thick-growing shrubbery, indistinguishable from the moist ground, so near to it was the color of the Indian suits which they wore, were five or six boys. Now, behold Ann! See how she turns disabilities of feminine life to use, making her weakness yield forth strength.

"Hist!" she murmured. "I have escaped from the palefaces; they are close on my trail! Hide me, my brothers, and later, when the night falls, vengeance!"

In a more natural tone, she added:

"Mayhew's yard's full of ripe pears."

She joined them, lying flat upon the soft, brown earth. The momentary suspicion that Ann was all dressed up had vanished from the mind of the tribe. She kicked her toes luxuriantly in the dirt; the branch of a neighboring shrub entangled itself in the lingerie hat and tore it off; she let it stay there.

"You'd better look out, Ann," Reddy Otis warned. "Look at your clothes!"

"Shut up!" Ann commanded shortly. "They're my clothes, ain't they? You ain't wearing 'em. You ain't been captured by palefaces; you ain't been performing menial tasks for 'em, weaving garlands for the daughters of that accursed race." Ann had been engaged in the ignoble task of stringing daisies with Hetty Mayhew. "But while in captivity, I was silent. I did all I was told, but these eyes saw. I tell you, there's two pear trees just full of Bartlett's; ripe ones, hangin' over the fence of Smith's back lot; why, you could get 'em just as easy—as easy—brothers. This stain upon the honor of our race must be blotted out before the day dawns."

It was about this moment that Aunt Ann, who was calling upon her sister, asked the question that so blighted Ann's life:

"Where is Ann?"

"Yes," said Aunt Belle. "Where's Ann, Evelyn?"

"I had her go to play with that nice little Mayhew girl, and it's time she was home." The three ladies peered up the street. "She'll be home soon," Ann's mother quavered weakly, knowing very well what the next move of the game would be.

"Evelyn," answered Aunt Ann, "that child's met some boys on the way home. I'd be willing to wager my new hat"—the aigrette on the new hat quivered aggressively—"that she's off playing with boys."

"I don't see what ails that child! None of us ever——"

"Oh, you don't know half," moaned Aunt Belle. "Why, I never go anywhere, not *anywhere* with *any one*, without seeing Ann streaking along the landscape, her legs like a pair of dividers, and fifteen dogs and twenty boys after her."

Mrs. Darrow smiled wanely. The picture of her daughter, thus painted by her younger sister, while a trifle exaggerated, was in its essence only too true.

"Well, something's got to be done about it," pursued Aunt Ann. "You were such a good child, Evelyn—wherever she gets it from. You were absent-minded and dreamy, and impractical, the way you are now, but you never showed the slightest trace of being a tomboy!"

No, Mrs. Darrow reflected, she had never shown the slightest trace. There flooded back to her mind memories of forgotten rebellions against the discipline of her able and efficient sister, yearnings to be out, to fare far afield with her brothers, that had stopped in the mere wish for the impossible. Memories, too, of heavenly walks across the country botanizing, with their father; walks that the other girls had not cared to share. After all, it was not so very long ago that that had all happened, and, now, here was Ann, outward and visible expression, as it were, of all the suppressed longings and rebellions and desires that had filled the heart of a little person whose name had been Evelyn Yates. Her reverie was broken in on by her elder sister's demanding sharply:

"Where is Ann?"

Alas! Where was Ann at that moment?

The truthful biographer must confess that, flat upon her stomach, Ann was worming a sinuous way through the high meadow grass of Smith's lot, leading her tribesmen to the delectable place where the paleface's Bartlett pears overhung the fence.

It was Reddy Otis who made the sortie and shook the limb of the pear tree; it was the others who gathered the pears up, and brought them back with beating hearts; for poignancy had been added to this adventure by Hetty Mayhew's voice shrilling:

"Mamma, there's some one in the pear tree!"

Flat upon their stomachs they had rested, low-crouched, while Mrs. Mayhew reconnoitred, where in the damp, crushed grass Ann had made a circular camp by the simple expedient of rolling. They had a luscious meal of unripe pears; the savor of broken grass,



They crouched low, hearts beating in delicious fright.

dew-drenched, and the sweet acrid smell of the pears, and the earth smells of on-coming evening uplifted their little souls. It was a high moment in Ann's life; in spite of absurd clothes, in spite of everything, her people were in the hollow of her hand. With a noble disregard of what people would say at home, she had led them to victory as easily, in spite of lingerie hat and white shoes, as though dressed in the garb of an Indian maiden, which she was allowed to wear, because, as Aunt

6

Belle said: "It didn't show dirt." It was a high delight thrown her out of the very lap of the gods, unexpected, after hours during which Ann's very soul had yawned.

Then, as if fate wished to show them how handsomely it could do things when it set about it, a hoarse voice cried:

"You young hellions, get out o' here! You b'en trampling my grass, an' if I catch you, I'll skin you!"

They crouched low, hearts beating in

delicious fright, for old Smith was known to be a man of his word. There were traditions of his having laid a youngster across his knee, and having administered a good one.

"I tell you," came the voice, "I'll tan the hide of the first one o' you I catch!"

He was evidently following one of the paths that they had plowed in the lush grass. They could hear the squeak of his boots, and could hear him muttering:

"Durn them young'uns, trompin' down my grass and me mowin' to-morrow!"

Flight was impossible. They huddled close together. But Ann, who had tasted of some of the highest happiness that earth grants to its children, was raised to a superhuman pitch of intelligence; something told her that she, and she alone, could save her people. So hissing in the ear of Reddy Otis: "You slide, while I talk to him," Ann, herself, advanced to meet the foe, meekness in every outline. The words of her lips were the disarming ones:

"It's only me, Mr. Smith!"

But, contrary to the gossip among the tribes, Smith was not a man dead to all human emotion, for, at the sight of the absurd little figure before him, be-draggled, its face smeared with the juice of pears; its white frock drooping limply, like the petals of a faded lily; he threw back his head and laughed deeply, satisfactorily; at what, exactly, Ann was at a loss to see, though she joined politely in his mirth.

"Well, if you don't beat the Dutch," he clamored, his Homeric laugh rising to heaven. "I swow, Ann, if you don't beat 'em all holler! Why, I'd give a new calf if I could see your Aunt Ann's face when her eye lights on you. What's that on your face? Well, if you ain't been a-hookin' Mayhew's pears!"

He turned and made for the house, and Ann trotted beside him, knowing that her companions were folding tents and silently stealing away. There are moments in this life when being a girl has its advantages! A just Providence has decreed that when a little girl is caught, instead of having her hide

tanned, she shall be merely laughed at, and Ann's quick ears had caught the underlying current of admiration in old Smith's mirth. Instead of being led home by the wrist to avenging parents, one is taken into the Smiths' pleasant kitchen, and fed on new-baked cookies, Mrs. Smith mourning, the while, over the state of one's clothes, and allowing that one must be an awful trial to one's ma.

True to the part that had been given her, Ann sat on the edge of the table, munching cookies, and swung debonaire legs, jauntily vaunting the fact that she was a "holy terror," treating her be-draggled plumage with the contempt it deserved. It was a full moment.

Old Smith, who, it seemed, was going to feed the pigs—he had a number of these interesting animals at some distance down the hill—drove Ann home, perched on the seat beside him, and grinned as the waiting ladies on the piazza chorused:

"There's Ann—there she is!"

And, with wider grins, listened to the chorus of dismay:

"For Heaven's sake, Ann! Why, look at that child! Ann, you look as if you had been buried and dug up! Ann, I was never so mortified in my life!"

He did not, however, see Miss Yates sniff the air daintily, or hear Mrs. Strong say:

"What is that odor, Ann? What was in those barrels?"

Or hear Ann's laconic reply: "Swill!"

I have given you the picture of Ann at a high moment when she had drunk heavily of the wine of life. At this time Ann was close on eleven. You will please imagine her growing at a distressing rate. During the ensuing year, from a stocky, able child, apparently made of steel and india rubber, she became lanky, her arms and legs protruded a little weedily from sleeve and below skirt, with a suggestion of fragility hitherto foreign to any part of Ann's adequate person. In those days it seemed to Ann's relatives that one

was always lengthening something. But all this would have made no difference if Ann's mind and tastes had altered with her legs and arms; cheerfully would they have let down tucks and elongated sleeves with skillful cunning, but with long black legs, even more like dividers than ever, Ann measured swiftly the earth's surface, accompanied by boys and dogs, as of yore, and hunted with the pack, regardless of admonitions from younger or elder aunt. As Mrs. Strong observed:

"Evelyn, it's becoming ridiculous!"

She made this statement—not for the first time—upon a warm day in June, having stopped with the pony phaeton for the purpose of driving out her sister. It was undoubtedly fate that made her drive past the ball field where two colleges were disputing for the championship. It was fate, and the knowledge of Ann's nature, that at that moment, made her ask the time-worn question:

"Where's Ann?"

"There she is," responded the mother of Ann.

There, indeed, was Ann, lying flat on her stomach upon the close-cropped grass, a score book under her nose, and strung along in postures much like Ann's—not ladylike postures—were faithful friends, such as Reddy Otis and the Willis kids.

No well-conducted woman can blame Mrs. Strong for bringing out these words with distinctness and purposeful emphasis:

"Evelyn, this *cannot* go on!"

There was nothing for it. Of course, it could not go on, though Mrs. Darrow responded weakly:

"Ann keeps a detailed score!"

"Ann keeps a detailed fiddlestick!" replied Mrs. Strong. "If Ann goes to any more ball games, she's got to go *chaperoned*! My dear, that child is as tall as a young lady. That's what comes of letting girls be tomboys. She's a giraffe! She will be thirteen her next birthday. Can't you arouse her pride? Get her some new clothes, Evelyn; let her feel like a young lady, my dear."

"Oh, but I want to keep her a child!" wailed Ann's mother.

"I wouldn't want to keep that kind of a child a minute longer than I could help," replied her sister sternly. "She's got to stop careering around town on grocery carts. She's got to stop playing football in the middle of the road, Evelyn. She's got to stop lying on her stomach at ball games, in the midst of several hundred young men!"

Meanwhile, Ann, in ignorance of the blow fate had in store for her, blissfully kept her beautiful detailed score, which, to-morrow, she would compare proudly with the official score. The only fly in Ann's pot of ointment that afternoon was the presence of the new boy, who knew not Ann. She felt conscious of his scornful look directed her way, from time to time, the unmistakable look, which said:

"What's the matter with you kids, letting a girl track around with you, anyhow?"

With rage in her heart, Ann considered that he looked upon her—oh, shameful thought!—as a girl, merely that. He had used to her the taunt that none of the boys she knew ever used.

"You can't pitch." He had told her, this with scorn. Alas! Ann knew this fatal fact but too well—she could not pitch; she threw like a girl, and she knew it.

But she could catch—could Ann; her place was in the outfield; and she could slide bases; and, she had draped these two accomplishments around her pitiful deficiency in throwing. Now, this outsider had dragged it to light before all the kids. Very well she realized that what he wanted to know very much was, why Ann was allowed to partake of the games of men. Alas! She had not knocked out his front teeth—her cunning had not averted from him the hand of chastisement. He did not know that once Ann had been Bareface, the great chief. He had not seen her in those glorious days when her strength had outstripped those of her mates; when, indeed, she was stronger than any one.

Now the fatal hour had struck. Ann was no longer stronger than any of the boys; her place among them was not the secure and definite thing that it had been. Indeed, for mysterious causes, of which she was ignorant, it was ebbing for her. What use was it to play marbles better than they could if you could not run as fast? Poor Ann, the limitations of sex were pressing upon her sorely, and the things they had all lately felt had been crystallized definitely by the coming of the new boy, a strong, puissant lad, who had fought his way into leadership within two months, and who accepted Ann grudgingly. Indeed, her presence to him was a sign—and Ann knew it, though she did not put it in words—that the heroic days of man were degenerating. She was only holding her place by deeds of foolhardy bravery, which, while they won applause from her old people, won from the outsider only a grudging:

"You think you're smart, don't you, Ann?"

The ball game over, "What let's do?" was, of course, the next question. Ann suggested hastily: "Let's go fishing." Ann excelled in this sport.

"Oh, I don't want to go and bait girls' hooks and take fishes off their lines." This from the new boy.

"I'd like to see you bait my hook," Ann growled out at him. "You had a nurse when I was baitin' hooks!"

The new boy showed pleasant, white teeth and a good-tempered smile—a smile of the superior male to inferior

woman. He squealed derisive little squeals of a girl who has a fish on her line, and acted it in derisive pantomime.

Ann ground her teeth in futile rage. Oh, for the days when at an insult like this, one fought for one's honor! Alas, that those Arcadian days were past when the boys were so little that they knew no chivalrous shame attached it-

self to "hittin' a girl!"

"I tell you, what, fellers, le's go swimmin'," the new boy suggested.

"Le's go fishin'," persisted Ann.

Swimming! There she couldn't follow.

The fellows looked undecided, from one to the other. They must not seem unmanly. Going swimming was all right, but going fishing was all right, too.

"I tell you what we'll do," said Ann, her sharpened wits quick to see the situation. "I'll race you for it, Billy. I'll race you from here to the elm tree."

Ann was fleet of foot as a greyhound.

"All right," he agreed cheerfully.

He was a youngster of pleasant spirit if one had not had to hate him for his insolence.

The details of the race I need not tell you. It was not for nothing that Billy agreed with evident grins. He beat Ann without effort. And now, I must recount the tragic downfall of Ann, for Ann sank to the foot of the elm tree, and, to her shame unspeakable cried, cried like a girl; oh, ignominy unutterable! cried publicly.

The fellows turned away their heads,



Old Smith drove Ann home, perched on the seat beside him

starting for swimming, but the new boy, in a moment of mistaken pity, leaned over Ann, and told her not to cry, and she shot at him an outraged fist, and crept home a broken thing, her kingdom gone from her; publicly beaten; shamed; that miserable and most ineffectual thing on God's earth—a girl!

She made no objection to the statement that henceforth she must go to ball games chaperoned. What did that matter? Ann's place in her world was over; the place that she had kept first by strength of arm, then by quickness of wit, was over, and she had been a cry baby. She didn't even fight the suggestion of new dresses and longer skirts. They might have saved their tact for other occasion. She was pleased even at going away on a two weeks' visit with Aunt Ann, during which time her behavior was exemplary. Aunt Ann congratulated herself on her knowledge of the feminine nature. She reported that Ann had behaved like a perfect little lady, for she could not know that the emptiness of life was eating Ann's heart out.

When she got back, the gang was organized under their new leader. They made no comment when Ann attended a ball game, sitting, beautifully dressed, with prim correctness, on the grand stand, still keeping score.

But fate has more mysterious things hidden in its inscrutable grab bag than the dethroned chieftainness knows.

Coming home from a ball game by herself, Ann's heart sang aloud within her, for it had been a great game, and there were certain advantages in a place directly behind the battery. She gave lofty and indifferent halloos to the gang that straggled past.

Then, far off down the street, arose a noise of battle; it was a dog fight. From afar, Ann recognized the yelps of her fighting fox terrier. She broke into that old swift run that had carried her over so many happy miles. With the dexterity born of long practice, she fished her dog from out the struggling pack. Her terrier firmly under her arm, she cuffed one dog and the other soundly, and sent them upon their business.

She looked up. Her big eyes widened in honest surprise, as a voice behind her said:

"Gee, Ann, you've got nerve!"

It was the new boy. Admiration brightened his merry eyes. Then he exclaimed:

"Why, Ann; your hand's bleeding!"

Ann's first instinct was to say: "'Taint nuthin'," but there stirred in her an instinct stronger than that. Wonderingly, she looked down at the scratched hand.

"So it is," she agreed.

The new boy was searching for a handkerchief. "I'll tie it up for you," he suggested.

Again an instinct, stronger than the old one declaring that she didn't need hands tied up, made Ann hold out her brown paw.

The new boy tied it up carefully. Ann thanked him and started on her way, but he followed beside her. And then there came to Ann a new experience. From under lowered lashes she looked at him sidewise, and saw him staring at her, and, for the first time in her life, Ann realized what it was to be looked at with the eyes of admiration. She looked very well, did Ann; flushed of face, bright of eye, with the added allurements of charmingly done hair and pretty clothes.

Her heart beat faster, a sudden unknown sense of power surged over her.

The new boy was asking: "Do you often do that?"

"With dogs, you know, one has to," she confessed, with new force and becoming modesty.

They had reached the gate. With an instinct as unerring as it was unconscious, she knew that she had come into her own again. Why, and wherefore, she could not tell, but she knew that once more she was Ann—Ann, puissant among her fellows; only drawing her strength from some new, mysterious source, and some source more lasting than the force of arms; some force that made mere skill in games a weapon of childhood.

And how true this was was proved

as follows: From up the street there came a long-drawn whoop from the fellows:

"Hey, Billy, ain't ye comin' swimmin'?"

Ann shot a sidelong glance at her companion as quick as that of a bird.

"Naw," he shouted back. "I don't want to!"

Together they turned into the gate, and went onto the shady piazza, where, according to the pleasant custom of the family, cool lemonade was in readiness. From one side of the house came the buzz of voices. A single ques-

tion detached itself in Mrs. Strong's voice, saying:

"Where's Ann, Evelyn?"

And Aunt Belle answered:

"Ann's on the porch; Ann's all right."

Ann smiled to herself in the fullness of content. She was all right, indeed. By some short cut, that she did not know existed, by using tools she didn't know she had, she had come back to her own. What had happened she could not have told. She only knew that singing in her veins was the old heady sense of power.



"An Orchard Through Whose Mellow Shade——"

AN orchard, through whose mellow shade
Sunbeams the long grass dapple
A book, that can aside be laid,
A large and ruddy apple,
An afternoon of idleness,
A sky of fleece-flecked blue—
Omar can keep his "wilderness,"
But I'd like these—and you.

Adown the stream floats the canoe,
The water lilies quiver,
A craft that has but room for two,
Upon a golden river!
No drink can equal the divine
Clear draught of heaven's blue—
Omar can keep his "jug of wine,"
If I have these—and you.

They say the Persian maids are sweet
And fair, with shining tresses,
With tiniest of tiny feet,
With words that are caresses,
Red lips that hide twin rows of pearls,
Dark eyes that languish, too—
But what care I for Omar's girls
If I can have—just you!

DOUGLAS ANDERSON.

PRINCE WUJOUH AND THE "ET CETRYS"

BY HOLMAN F. DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

IN the case of Look vs. Littlefield, Lawyer Jewett opened the case for the plaintiff by a brief explanation to the jury—in legal terms—of what constituted trespass, nuisance, persecution, and persistent and malicious harrowing of one's feelings. And then he sat down, blew his nose, wiped off his spectacles, paddled pompously among his papers, and called the plaintiff forth.

"Mr. Hiram Look will take the stand."

Mr. Look put his plug hat carefully under the chair that he occupied in the bar inclosure, and took the oath on the stand, with the air of a man who proposes to afford the world an example in the way of giving in the truth, and the whole truth.

Name, residence, occupation as "retired showman," and other incidentals having been communicated to an attentive panel, Lawyer Jewett leaned back, as one who leads a trump card in full confidence, and said:

"Mr. Look, I'm going to ask you to state to court, and gentlemen of the jury, exactly upon what grounds you bring the present action. Proceed, Mr. Look!"

Hiram grasped the rail of the witness box, cast a somewhat prolonged gaze

on the judge to challenge attention, regarded High Sheriff Aaron Sproul haughtily with passing glance, and turned to the jury.

"Here's the facts, gents," he shouted, with the briskness and assurance that had characterized his utterances on the barker's stand before his tent, in days of old. "Listen, one and all! I will now proceed to put before you—"

"Mr. Witness," snapped the judge, and Hiram whirled to face him, impatient at the interruption. "I must ask you to moderate the tone of your voice."

"There's only one way I can talk to the public," demurred the old showman. "When a man has stood thirty years in front of a tent, barkin', he gets into habits that he can't break all at once."

"A courtroom is no place for stump speeches from the witness stand," stated his honor, with crisp dignity. "This is neither a political meeting, a circus, nor a fair. Now, proceed!"

Hiram's eyes flashed, and he caught the sheriff's gaze as he turned again to face the jury. The sheriff glowered at him. It was an expression that hinted at strained relations preceding this scene. Hiram returned this visual malevolence with interest. But he

struggled with himself, and bespoke the panel more mildly.

"I've bought a stand in this village, and have been tryin' to raise a garden that would be a credit to the place. Littlefield's hens have clawed everything up, from beans to begonies. But that ain't what this suit, here, is about."

"You will confine yourself to the case in hand, Mr. Witness," admonished the judge dryly.

Hiram turned once more and stared at him. His honor had straight side whiskers, like strips of rabbit fur, and thin, cold features of parallels and right angles—hateful antithesis of Hiram's generous rotundity. The two bristled at each other with hostility that was instinctive.

"If I ain't goin' to be let tell this story, court will so notify, and I'll step down," rasped the old showman.

The sheriff rapped his gavel.

"Proceed, Mr. Witness," vociferated the court.

"Well, gents, it's this way; if I can ever get to what I'm trying to tell," resumed Hiram. "This Littlefield that lives neighbor—that hoss-faced man settin' over there—has got hens. We'll let that garden-scratchin' matter drop, though that's a chance for a suit. I've improved his breed some with a dog and a shotgun. But to get even with me, he's gone to work and bought roosters, just roosters. He keeps 'em shut up in a hen pen that he's built right close to the fence, under my bedroom window. Now, he ain't raisin' them roosters for market. There ain't an extry ounce of meat on any of the stilt-shanked, gander-necked, tripe-hided——"

"This is positively the last warning I shall give the witness," cried his honor. "This is a courtroom, not a grocery store."

"Is there anything in the law that says I shan't be allowed to tell gents of a jury the facts why I'm bringin' this suit?" demanded Hiram.

"Leave out those trivial matters, sir, and state your case."

"Trivial matters!" Hiram shouted. "Trivial! Gents of this jury, do you call it trivial to have about forty raw-necked

old roosters begin crowin' under your bedroom window four-o'clock every mornin'? Do you call it trivial, to have old beetle-belly Littlefield, there, come out nights and set a lantern in that hen pen, so that them roosters will think mornin' has come? And them roosters ain't let out where I can get at 'em, and he's addin' to 'em all the time, and writin' up country to get holt of some that can crow louder, and——"

At a signal from his honor the sheriff pounded the gavel, and the amount of energy Cap'n Sproul put into the business showed that some kind of personal animus was behind his muscle.

"Is that all there is to this case—petty imagination in regard to the crowing of cocks, an entirely natural and defensible prerogative of the henyard?" demanded the court, addressing Lawyer Jewett.

"May it please your honor," began the lawyer placatingly, but Hiram was in no mood for the sort of humility that prevails before the bar of justice. The presence in court of the hated Littlefield, who was now grinning at his discomfiture, the persistent nagging of this judge, for whom his dislike was prompt, instinctive, and mutual, his sense of wrongs had jumped his quick temper out of bounds. He broke in.

"A judge that will set up and say that havin' forty or fifty roosters doin' a night and day shift under a bedroom window is a natural prerogative, and ain't malicious, is either bought or——"

A furious clatter of the gavel, mingling with the judge's indignant fulminations, shut off the rest of Hiram's astounding outbreak, except his closing words, uttered in the shocked hush: "And the way I've been used, shows it!"

His honor stood up, and extended gownned arm at the culprit.

"Step down, Mr. Witness. You are ordered to pay a fine of fifty dollars. And, until you pay that fine and humbly apologize for your shameful outbreak in this courtroom, thereby purging yourself of contempt of this court, you stand committed to the county jail."

"Bring on your handcuffs! I'll never pay a damnation cent of blood money!" roared Hiram.

Sheriff Sproul bore down on this Berserker with an alacrity that indicated that he had been anticipating some such duty from the beginning.

"I knew you'd get into trouble. I

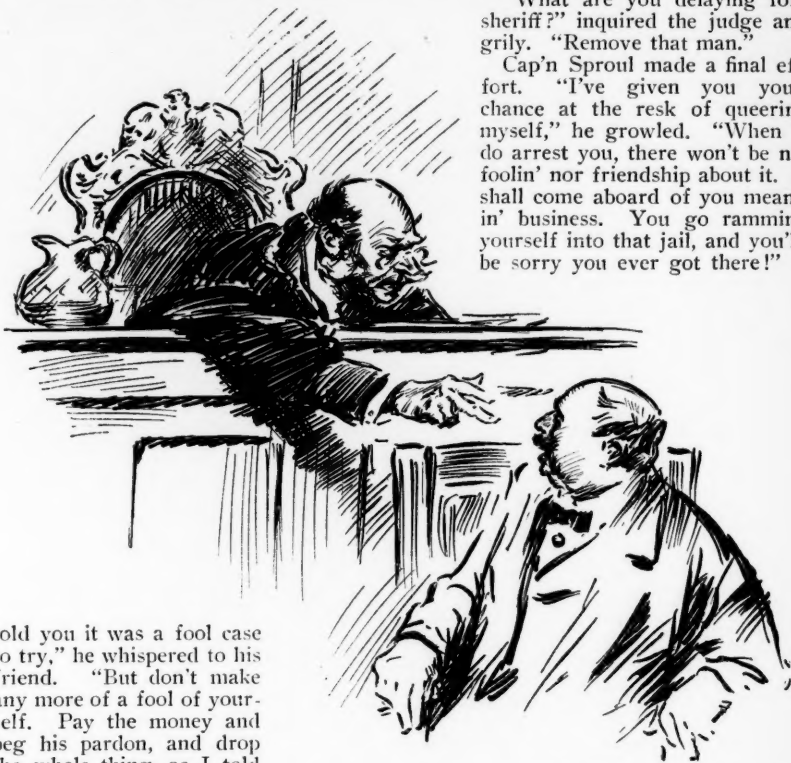
Sheriff Sproul restrained himself, but the red of mortification streamed up his cheeks from the covert of his beard.

"I don't want to put you in jail, Hiram," he muttered. "I don't want to go as far as that."

"Handcuffs!" bawled the irreconcilable. "Leg irons! Fetch 'em all on!"

"What are you delaying for, sheriff?" inquired the judge angrily. "Remove that man."

Cap'n Sproul made a final effort. "I've given you your chance at the risk of queerin' myself," he growled. "When I do arrest you, there won't be no foolin' nor friendship about it. I shall come aboard of you meanin' business. You go rammin' yourself into that jail, and you'll be sorry you ever got there!"



told you it was a fool case to try," he whispered to his friend. "But don't make any more of a fool of yourself. Pay the money and beg his pardon, and drop the whole thing, as I told you to do at the start."

Mr. Look did not appreciate this mediation, and he exposed the sheriff by bellowing refusal.

"I want the handcuffs. I want to be dragged out of here. I don't want any halfway business. Go ahead, the whole of you. Persecute! Go just as far as you can! And then I'll show up this whole gang before the grand, high, supreme court of this country!"

"You are ordered to pay a fine of fifty dollars."

Hiram snorted contemptuously and looked over the sheriff's head at the judge. "Give me a pair of handcuffs and I'll arrest myself, seein' that you don't seem to have a sheriff that's able to do the job."

Cap'n Sproul thrust friendship from him then. He set his hands under Hiram's shoulder blades and propelled

that gentleman from the courtroom on the trot, a deputy facilitating exit by holding the door open.

Hiram clattered down the stairs willingly, and allowed the indignant sheriff to shove him along the corridor leading to the jail office. The prisoner seemed to take gloomy relish in his plight. In the office the cap'n addressed him briefly and wrathfully:

"I handed you fair warnin' about goin' into any such lawsuit, anyway. I tried to straighten things for you there in court. You queered me before the face and eyes of the court and the public. You've cut your swath; you've had your way. I want to tell you again, there ain't goin' to be any foolin' about this thing."

"Do I act like I was foolin'?" demanded Hiram.

"You are a prisoner, and I am sheriff. You don't get no favors."

"I demand to be handcuffed and put in the doghole," said his friend. "I want to be pushed just as far as I can be pushed. And then I'll talk to the United States in a way that will make Russia proud of Siberia."

"I'm only goin' to do my duty," stated the cap'n sullenly. "And if I don't do it, discipline in this jail——"

"You do your duty, or I'll report you myself," stormed Hiram. "I want to be persecuted, because I'm goin' to rip the law of this country from the main entrance clear to the round-top!"

A deputy entered, bringing the plug hat that had been left in the courtroom.

"Bring on your striped suit," urged Hiram, refusing his headgear. "I'll have a picture of myself took in it. I'll show the world that martyrs ain't dead yet."

"I'll give you one more chance," said the cap'n, one final pang of friendship prompting him. "Ask for bail, and I'll go your bonds for you."

"He can't be bailed," suggested the deputy humbly. "I've seen the law on it. Contempt ain't bailable."

He hung the plug hat on a hook in the office, as though realizing that it would not be needed again right away.

"I'll complain to the court if I don't

get a striped suit and handcuffs," raged Hiram, reveling in his plight.

"Get one," the sheriff grimly ordered his subordinate. "And you needn't be particular whether it's clean or not. Bring along some leg irons, too. You can clank them and whistle a tune to fit," he suggested to the prisoner. "And now, I want less talk out of you. I ain't in the habit of lettin' prisoners give off orders in this jail."

"Abuse me—order me 'round—persecute me—that's what I want," urged Hiram, hungry for punishment.

He promptly assumed the mien of the broken-spirited, was silent, with the air of the martyr, and put on the jail clothes that the deputy brought. Then he went to a cell, kicking up his heels behind him to make the fetters clank as loudly as possible.

"Sheriff," ventured the deputy, when he and his chief were back in the office again, "ain't that an awful thing to happen—one of the leadin' men of this town, locked up in county jail?"

"He don't get any of my sympathy—not a mite," blazed the sheriff. "And, if I catch you, or any one else 'round this jail, handin' him in anything except the regular bean wagon and jail vittles, I'll put you and him into the doghole together. Where he belongs is in the insane horsepittle, and I'll have him transferred there."

And he stamped back to the outraged courtroom to assist in impaneling a jury for the next case on the docket.

Within an hour he was summoned to his office. His first thought, when the deputy spoke to him, was that his latest prisoner had broken out in a new place.

"It's Nelse Urban, the deputy from up Carmel way," the officer hastened to enlighten him. "And you'd better hurry down. I've been turnkey here twenty years, and I never seen nothin' like it."

Deputy Urban had brought prisoners. Cap'n Sproul stared from one to the other of the assortment, amazement gathering on his features.

"I reckon I'll have to explain and take 'em in order as they come," stated Deputy Urban, with business briskness, "or else you won't get head nor tail out

of what this thing, here, means. Stand along the wall, there, you critters! And don't you let none of them animals get loose here."

There were seven men and one woman in the deputy's convoy. The woman had two apes, that she held captive by dog chains. A smoke-colored man, in a turban, had a box, through the slats of which a huge snake thrust its head, and leered at the horrified sheriff. A gawky-looking man, with chin whiskers, had a cage as big as a dog kennel, and in it were four creatures that Cap'n Sproul recognized as quill pigs.

The others in the party had no live stock, but they were interesting objects. A man in a frock coat had long black hair and a mustache dyed and waxed into poniard points. Four men stood with arms about each other's shoulders, legs crossed, tip of right toe resting jauntily on the floor over left instep, as though the party had just finished a "brother clog," and were waiting for applause.

The deputy proceeded briskly to label consignment, tagging each as he passed along the line.

"'African Anna,' she calls herself, and the 'Congo Perfessers,' meanin' them educated monkeys. 'Prince'—gimme that name again!"

"Prince Wujoud," said the smoke-colored man haughtily.

"'Prince What's-his-name—you've heard him—with his sacred snake. A man named Aruna Vittum, with his 'Educated Pincushions,' he calls 'em—meanin' them porkypines. 'Mysterious



He promptly assumed the mien of the broken-spirited.

Siper' — some-thing—"

"Siperelle," volunteered the man of the mustache indignantly.

"You've heard him! Hypnoticker, puts 'em into trances. And the Comical Newt Troupe!"

"You don't mean to tell me, do you, that you're dumping this menagerie in on me as prisoners?" demanded the sheriff.

"I do. That's what. Been showin' in Carmel. Dretful mean show, too. Got into a fight amongst themselves. Some one of 'em—or all of 'em—started in slicin' up the feller that managed 'em. Doc Syphers is patchin' him together gradual. Couldn't get much head nor tail to it before trial justice. All bound over to next term of supreme court as witnesses. Fly-by-nighters and can't get bail, of course. Here they be—and here's your papers. Gimme writin' and I'll go collect my fees."

Cap'n Sproul looked up and down the row of his bizarre assortment, making rapid estimate of the situation. The grand jury of that session of *nisi prius* had completed its labors and gone home. No criminal case could be tried until the next term, three months ahead. He skimmed the papers. The Carmel trial justice had dodged responsibility, and had sent them all up as witnesses unable to secure bonds. That meant that the county must board them and pay each person witness' fees, as provided by the statute, for each day during their detention.

"You won't find 'em kickin' or uncomfortable prisoners," vouchsafed Mr. Urban. "Squire Dilloway explained to



A snake-colored man, in a turban, had a box, through the slats of which a huge snake thrust its head, and leered at the horrified sheriff.

'em that they'd all be drawin' good day's wages whilst they're locked up—and I guess that's better than they've been averagin' in the show business."

The cap'n now understood the look of deep content that rested on his charges.

"You tell your Squire Dilloway, for me, will you, that he's made a mistake?" The cap'n had been pawing over the commitment papers, cursing in wholesome, deep-sea fashion under his breath. And when Mr. Urban looked alarmed, thinking of the matter of his

fees, he added: "He ain't put them baboons, quill pigs, and that snake on the pay roll of this county as witnesses. Whilst he was about it in his gouge game, he might just as well have made a clean sweep."

"You ain't hintin' that the trial justice court of Carmel is crooked, be ye?" demanded Mr. Urban.

"No, I don't think he knows enough to be crooked. A man that don't know any better than to dump this bunch of a-dollar and sixty-two cents per day bloodsuckers on this county for three

months, instead of shooing 'em out of the State, couldn't be crooked—it takes some glimmerin' of sense to be a rascal."

Mr. Urban undertook to defend the method of handling crime in Carmel, but Cap'n Sproul drove him out of the room. "Go ahead and loot the county treasury," he urged. And then he took fresh survey of his new charges and prepared to assume the white man's burden.

After conference with the turnkey, he decided to lodge his prisoners in the poor debtors' quarters, field beds in one big room for the men and a separate apartment for African Anna.

The matter of the menagerie worried the turnkey, but the sheriff made short work of that problem. There was a storeroom under the debtors' quarters, used as a receptacle for contraband liquors and attached goods held in the custody of the sheriff.

"You'll be let down there three times a day to feed your critters yourselves," he informed the owners. "Whatever it is they eat, let me know."

The cap'n had not intended to be on neighborly terms with Hiram. His resentment at his friend's needless martyrdom was hot, and cooled slowly. But before the afternoon was over, Cap'n Sproul went out into the cellroom on pretense of a tour of inspection. He felt a rankling impulse to badger the captive who had put his best friend into such an uncomfortable hole.

Hiram was sitting on his bunk. He had called for paper and a pencil, and was writing furiously.

"Po'try or a novel?" inquired the sheriff.

"Be careful how you handle me or what you say to me," advised his friend. "It will all go into this piece. I'm exposing the whole gang of you. The papers of this country—yessir, of this world, will ring with this persecution, I can tell you that!"

"I thought I'd come round and tell you there ain't any need of your bein' lonesome here in jail, if that will soothe your feelin's any. I've just took in a lot of your kind."

"My kind!"

"There's a feller with a big snake, and a woman with a couple of monkeys, and some feller named Vittum, with four quill pigs——"

"My kind!" roared Hiram. "Say, look-a-here, Sproul, this is gettin' beyond plain persecution. It's gettin' personal, and I don't stand for personalities."

"You used to be in the show business, didn't you? These are show business. They've been persecuted, too. Sent here because they couldn't get bail as witnesses. I didn't know but what you'd want to get their story to put into that persecuting piece you're writing."

Hiram did not have time then to accept or refuse. The voice of the turnkey was heard bawling for the sheriff. There was such a note of urgency and terror in the voice that Cap'n Sproul made all haste to the office.

The turnkey had his back against a door that admitted to a corridor leading to the storeroom.

"It's them baboons," he stuttered. "The ragin' devil has broke out in 'em. They're rippin' daylight out of things in that room."

"What ye standin' there for, then?"

"I'm goin' to tell you," gasped the officer. "That's just what I'm tryin' to tell——"

But the cap'n bore down on him and yanked him away from the door with such violence that the man set his teeth into his tongue. Words, in place of action, always set the cap'n's temper aflame.

But the moment he had flung open the door the sheriff leaped into the air and hurdled something, with a mighty yell. It was the big snake. He had been waiting at that door for exit. He promptly seized the opportunity and squirmed into the office. The turnkey hurdled the monster with the same agility that the sheriff had displayed, and followed his chief down the corridor in headlong flight. The cap'n had decided that retreat in the direction in which the snake was not going was safest. When he arrived opposite the store-

room door the ravage was going on within. The upper panels of the door were formed of iron bars, and between two of these the snake had worked his way.

"It was what I was tryin' to tell you," chattered the turnkey. "About the snake! They was rippin' his box. And look at them cigars!"

The cigars had been attached for debt, many boxes of them, and were stored in the custody of the sheriff. The apes had been amusing themselves

by splitting open the boxes and flinging the cigars in showers at each other. The floor was carpeted with tobacco, and the porcupines, released from their cage by the obliging simians, were grunting and wallowing through the litter. When the sheriff arrived at the door the big apes had just succeeded in wrenching off the cover of a case of whisky. A long-necked bottle could suggest only one use to a monkey. They seized the necks and dashed the bottles against the stone walls.

"If there ain't two g'rilla funerals from this jail, by Judas, it's because they can hit harder'n I can!" raged the sheriff, struggling at the lock with his big key. He did not wait for weapons or reinforcements. There were plenty of empty jugs and splintered boards. He flung open the door, and grabbed a jug in each hand.

His posture invited the apes to a grotesque game of leapfrog. One after the other, they pounced upon the cap'n's head and shoulders, and hopped from him to the deputy, who was entering the door. It was over so quickly that neither man had time to raise hand against them. The sheriff and his under-trapper chased the fugitives down the corridor and into the office, but the agile simians had a good start. The



His posture invited the apes to a grotesque game of leapfrog.

windows were open to catch the summer breeze. Out they went upon the greensward of the little park, and scampered away.

"Humpbacked Hosea!" yelled the turnkey. "That snake's got away, too!"

The serpent had sought the sunshine by way of the window and a gutter, and was making his way contentedly along the warm bricks of the sidewalk. Frenzied rout of pedestrians signalized his appearance in public.

Cap'n Sproul could not tear himself away from that window for a few moments. The celerity with which he had let loose a fifteen-foot python and two big apes upon a defenseless community nearly paralyzed his energies. And in the space of time he stood there he saw one of the monkeys drop from a courthouse tree upon the head of a woman who was fleeing from the serpent. The woman's hat seemed to have interested the ape. He yanked it off her head, and scurried back up a tree. The place of his retreat was marked by feathers that he began to sow upon the air. The woman had given one shriek of mortal terror, and fainted in her tracks.

A truckman, safely intrenched on his high seat and watching the big snake, bravely climbed down, to rescue the hapless lady. At that moment, the other ape fancied the pompon on the truck horse's headstall, and dropped out of a tree onto the horse's back, to secure it. The truck horse squealed, and went stampeding down the street, the big cart roaring at his heels. The monkey rode horseback out of sight.

The tumult without had attracted attention from within, other than the agonized observation of the high sheriff of Cuxabexis, recognizing his culpability. He heard the voice of Prince Wujourd at the window of the debtors' room above. The prince was notifying all authority within sound of his voice that his sacred snake was worth much money, many thousands of dirty, infidel dollars, and that he should hold his jailer responsible. African Anna also delivered similar information in regard to her apes.

"If a hair on one of 'em gets hurt, I'll sue for ten thousand dollars," she cried. "They're my means of livelihood, and I know what the law is."

"We've got to act spry, Trask," gasped the sheriff. "I'll tackle the monkeys. They're dangerouser." He had wild hopes of being able to coax them to him with peanuts. "I'm willin' to take the desp'rit' chances. You go pick up the snake."

"No, sir," quavered Mr. Trask. "There ain't nothin' in a turnkey's rules to make him go out and pick up p'isonous serpents."

"I summons you as a posse," commanded the sheriff. "You've got to obey. It's a jail offense if you don't."

"You can lock me up soon's you're mind to," stated Mr. Trask abjectly. "I ain't goin' out and play tag with that snake, though!"

Cap'n Sproul had no time to waste on this broken reed. The apes, the horseback rider having safely returned after watching the smash-up, had descended again, and raided a peanut roaster that was whistling cheerily in front of a fruit shop across the street. They tipped it over, filled their mouths, and climbed up the tree once more. The prospect of interesting them in peanuts right away no longer appealed to the cap'n. He hastened out into the cell-room.

"Hiram," he urged, "you've got to come help. You used to be a circus man, and you know animals. Them animals I've just been tellin' you about has got loose out into this town. You know how to handle wild critters. Come, help me!"

"Persecute, twit, and abuse a man one minute, and then come beg him to help the next! I told you this country would find out it made a mistake when they conspired to put me into jail. Let 'em find it out! Let 'em find it out good and plenty!"

"But ain't you goin' to help me out of this scrape? It's my own. I let 'em out by accident. It'll all be blamed onto me. I'll be sued. Them monkeys is rippin' off women's hats and that snake is——"

"If a gorilla hung from every tree limb in the village, and snakes was thicker'n hoss flies, I wouldn't turn my hand over. And tell that to the old pickled tomcod that sent me here and to them that has been snickerin' because I'm in jail."

"And that's what you call friendship, is it?" demanded the cap'n.

"Friendship! You stand there and talk about friendship, after you've dragged me out of a courtroom, disgracin' me forever, and puttin' a dirty striped suit on me, and leg irons, when I hain't showed any signs of tryin' to get away; and then come and stand on the outside of them bars!"—Hiram pounded his fist on them for emphasis—"and talk to me about friendship! Hain't you got no shame left?"

Cap'n Sproul departed, not trusting himself to reply to this amazing tirade. The ingratitude of it was too much for him. In the office, the turnkey was holding the telephone, awaiting him. The first selectman of the village was on the other end, excited and indignant.

"What are you going to let out of that jail next?" he demanded, with withering sarcasm. "Here's a snake a hundred feet long, traveling down the middle of Main Street and——"

"Set your constables after him," directed the sheriff.

"My constables ain't snake charm-ers, and the critter came out of your jail. You're sheriff. You 'tend to your duties!"

The court crier burst into the office.

"His honor wants you in the courtroom," he yelled. "Quick! It's serious. Wild men has come in the window."

It was a call that had urgency and authority behind it, and the information was startling. Cap'n Sproul guessed what the invaders were while he was running upstairs. He was right. The apes had climbed a gutter, and entered the courtroom. The sheriff found one up in the tangle of the big central chandelier, dropping the lamp globes delightedly, one by one. His

honor, behind his desk, livid with rage and fear, was fighting off an ape that was frolicking among his papers. Lawyers, jurymen, and spectators were scrambling to get out at the rear exit. The huge, hairy creatures had terrified them.

The appearance of the sheriff seemed to awaken jovial memories in the apes. The one in the chandelier sprang to his shoulders, leaped to the bar rail, from bar rail to window sill, and disappeared. The judge's tormentor followed suit. It was the second time within a few minutes that they had used Cap'n Sproul in their unspeakable game of leapfrog.

"What does this atrocity mean, sir?" roared the judge. "What does that tumult mean that has been going on outside? I'm told you are keeping those animals about these premises!"

"Mebbe them that gave you that information told you I'd adopted 'em, or was keepin' 'em for pets," suggested the cap'n, stung by this public reprimand.

"No levity, sir! Remember that you are in a courtroom, a fact that a sheriff should never forget. If those animals are yours, or in your charge, capture them at once. Mr. Messenger, close those windows! Court will resume!"

"I wonder," muttered the cap'n, descending the stairs, "if there ain't a few other officials, individuals, courts, conventions, and secret societies that can call me up and order me to catch them damnation g'rillas and that snake!"

A panting and perspiring youth was waiting in the office. "That snake is in the hallway of Rines' Block, sheriff, and there's all the women of the Sunlight Whist Club don't dare to come down out of the hall, and they're yellin' out of the windows, like lunatics. What will I tell 'em?"

"Tell 'em to——" But even in his tumult of spirit he managed to choke back that retort. He hastened up to the debtors' room, and burst in on the captives.

"Look here, you snake owner, whatever your name is, you come along with

me and catch that thing that belongs to you. Hurry, now!"

But Prince Wujoud merely lifted his hands and rolled his eyes. "It is fate," he sighed. "He has gone. He will die."

"And you needn't ask me to go runnin' around this town, chasin' monkeys," declared African Anna, anticipating him. "They were took away from me and let go, and now they've forgot their education and gone back wild again. Somebody'll pay for that, and pay good and plenty."

The cap'n glowered at them. He understood what this apathy signified. They proposed to sell to him or to the county of Cuxabexis, by way of a lawsuit, some dead animals, at a good, stiff figure.

"We've been deprived of the tools of our trade," volunteered the woman, returning his look with interest, "and we know what the law on that is, and somebody will suffer!"

In the chaos of events that had engulfed him since the arrest of Hiram Look, Cap'n Aaron Sproul's temper had lasted remarkably, considering the natural brittleness of it. At that point he gave up appeal or diplomacy. He rushed out and armed himself with the fire ax in the corridor, secured a belying pin that he kept over his desk to remind him of old days, tucked a big revolver into each hip pocket, and started on the warpath. He visited the storeroom first. He proposed to kill the four porcupines, to start with, in order to get his hand in and make a clean job of it. But the porcupines had departed from the litter of the broken cigars and the effluvia of the wasted whisky. They had gnawed through a baseboard in the corridor, and had escaped into some place unknown.

The dusk was coming on, and he could see no traces of the apes in the trees of the courthouse yard. On his way to Rines' Block, he met the ladies of the Sunlight Whist Club, hurrying home to prepare belated suppers.

"And no thanks to you, Mr. Sheriff, that we ever got out," declared their spokeswoman. "The snake went away,



The woman's hat seemed to have interested the ape.

that's all. Did you wait to hear that he'd gone?"

As to where the snake had departed, various opinions saluted him, as he investigated along the street. The general verdict was that the dread creature had hidden itself, and was ready to seize upon any victim that was presented advantageously.

Therefore, he found the village merchants closing their stores as the dusk settled.

"If we had any kind of protection here in this place from them that's been elected to protect," growled one indignant trader, addressing a knot of townsfolk at a time when the sheriff was in hearing, "we wouldn't have been in this scrape. There was that snake

roamin' the streets, threatenin', and due to be killed by them in authority. And them in authority loaf in their ease till snake has had a chance to pick a lurkin' place, and stay in wait for them he would devour. There won't be any trade on this street to-night. Might just as well shut up stores. Couldn't be any worse than if it was a state of siege in time of war! And all this detriment to business because them in authority ain't done their duty—to say nothin' of what a gorilla will do if he catches you out alone in the night! This town is in a bad way!"

"Do you expect me to stand here and engage in joint debate with you on that question?" asked the cap'n acridly, seeing that they were staring at him. "Well, here's my side of it, for a starter! You're a streetful of cowards that didn't dare to shoot off a gun to kill a snake. But if you go to shootin' off your mouths at me, you'll find I'm dangerouser."

"But what did you set 'em loose for?" inquired a citizen, at a safe distance from the sheriff. "Trask, the turnkey, says you set 'em loose. That's what we don't understand."

Cap'n Sproul opened his mouth, but he shut it again, without a word. Mere speech could not do justice to a question of that sort. He swung his ax over his shoulder, clutched his belaying pin, and marched on.

His way to the jail took him past the hotel. Conditions for hunting big game did not seem to be right that evening. He decided to go home. But the landlord of the tavern, staring anxiously from the porch, halted him.

"They told me you were downtown here somewheres, sheriff," he called. "The judge has been sending for you. Wants to see you, right off, in his room."

Cap'n Sproul did not disarm for that interview. He absent-mindedly walked upstairs and into the judge's room, his ax on his shoulder, his bludgeon in his hand.

His honor did not comment on the appearance the cap'n presented, but the tone of his voice made his resentment

plain. "Mr. Sheriff, I'm trying to get some head or tail to this unheard-of performance that is going on in this place. Delegations of citizens have been waiting on me and complaining that you are not doing your duty in regard to these wild animals. And they say you turned them loose. As presiding justice, I must ask you to explain."

"Let me ask your honor, humbly and respectfully," inquired the sheriff, controlling himself, "whether there's any hard and fast rules laid down in law or by the court as to how a sheriff shall go to work to arrest a couple of g'rilas and catch a big boy constructor snake? Is there anything laid down in the books about it?"

"Of course there isn't!" snapped the judge testily. "You admit, do you, those animals are loose, to the danger of the public? Then, go capture them."

"And no rules provided?"

"I say, of course not! The question is ridiculous, sir. Get the creatures out of the streets."

"I don't want any misunderstandin' about this and any more callin' down about the way I do my duty," insisted the cap'n. "I reckon you're authority when you say there ain't any rules set down in law. Next thing I want you to tell me is whether I can go ahead and make my own rules?"

"Of course you can," blurted the judge, and then he squinted suspiciously at his caller. He seemed to sniff either subtle sarcasm or sly attempt to rag him in these bland inquiries. "Now, look here, sir, we've had about enough of this trivial conversation. As an officer, you recover those animals back into your custody, and let's have peace in this village."

"I reckon I see a way clear to have it," stated the cap'n, and he shifted his ax and marched out.

When he reached the jail he was in a prime frame of mind in which to say a few things to Turnkey Trask, and opened his mouth to do so. But the turnkey shifted attention to a more pressing matter by informing him that Hiram Look, in cell sixteen, wished to see him at once.

The mood of that distraught and variable individual had altered again. He was in contrite mood.

"It was the dark that brought it onto me, Aaron," he confessed, "I ain't softened toward that judge. And I'll have the ha'slet out of Rooster Littlefield! But I see now that I didn't have no right to be mixin' you in with 'em. You set here and tell me about them critters that's loose, and about what kind of a gang you've got here in jail all of a sudden. I've only been hearin' rumors. Mebbe I can help."

But Cap'n Sproul was subject to somewhat variable moods, also.

"I suppose you're goin' to tag this new feelin's of yourn 'friendship,'" he twitted, "but I know what is it—it's just that pickid-nosed old curiosity of yourn. I needed you this afternoon—and I needed you bad, and you went back on me. I ain't got any more use for you—not at all—not ever! You stay here after this in this cell, and keep quiet, and stop askin' for me every ten minutes, or I'll fix you out with a gag, in addition to them leg irons. There? Set here in the dark and meditate on that!"

He stamped away.

In the debtors' room, the sheriff found Prince Wujound and his assorted associates, taking life easy, with pipes and cigarettes. The cap'n interrupted a computation, of which he heard a snatch as he entered. They were figuring what their witnesses' fees would amount to at the end of three months.

"Get on your coats!" commanded the sheriff brusquely.

He unlocked the door leading to the

woman's room, and ordered her to get ready for the street.

Prince Wujound seemed to be fully attired, turban and all, and Cap'n Sproul seized on him first, ran him downstairs, and thrust him out upon the granite steps through the door, that he ordered the turnkey to open.

"Keep ready to open, there's more comin'," the sheriff stated.

He brought them down, one after the other, hustling them savagely, for they did not appear to be willing to depart of their own will as briskly as the sheriff's haste demanded.

At last he had them all herded on the stone steps. He shut the big door, and addressed them.

"Now, look-a-here, you peep-show plasters of perdition, you are outside of this jail. You understand that, don't you?"

"You can't do it," snarled Aruna Vitum, "you can't throw regularly committed prisoners out of a jail, like this; you can't do it."

"But I have done it," stated the sheriff grimly. "So there ain't any chance for a r e m e n t. Now, there ain't goin' to be

any more foolin' between you and me and this town about them g'rillas, that snake, and them quill pigs. Them cussed, worthless things is makin' more of a stir in this place than a Presidential election. I don't know how to catch 'em. You do; they're yours, and that's your business. Now, you listen sharp to me. If you want to get back into this jail and get back onto your job of earnin' a dollar sixty-two a day, board free, you come back with tickets of admission. Them tickets will be: Two g'rillas, one snake,



He swung his ax over his shoulder, clutched his belaying pin, and marched on.

four quill pigs. Nothin' else good at the door. You'd better get busy."

African Anna snapped her fingers under his nose. "You're one big fool. We'll just report that you have thrown us—prisoners, just think of that!—thrown us out of jail—a sheriff doing that! And we'll be put back, and you'll be put out! So, now!"

"I ain't ever believed in threatenin' a lady," replied the cap'n quietly, "but you listen to me. It would take the word of just two thousand of you fly-by-nighters to queer mine in this county. Come back, if you'd rather play this hand out that way; but there'll be a window and rope fixed to show how you got away—and when escaped prisoners are back in this jail again, let me tell you, lady and gents, hell, in the middle of the hayin' season there, is a cool and salubrious place compared with this jail. When I've got business, I state it fair and open. You've got the facts. Take your pick."

"Now, just one moment, prithee, good jailer," said one of the "Comical News." "We haven't any animals to capture. We don't stand for this shoving on the cold, cold world."

"Nor I," Professor Siperelle stated indignantly, twisting the points of the mustache that the cap'n had disarranged.

"You go, too," said the sheriff curtly. "You're all of the same bunch, and you're all out of a salary in this place till you bring them critters back. It'll pay you to get busy, and you're all needed on the job. Hypnotize the g'rillas, you perfesser, there, and you other four can sing a song to charm that snake. Do anything you want to! But bring 'em!"

There was no profit in further parley, and he turned to go in. But at that moment a man rushed from within, slamming open the big door. He knocked the cap'n to one side, with a mighty buffet, and dashed down the steps, rolling over the show folks like ninepins. The cap'n's impulse to chase this unknown fugitive into the night

promptly changed when he saw "African Anna" and her associates making for the open door. He jumped in, shut it, and drove the bolts.

Turnkey Trask was just picking himself up out of a corner.

"It was the Honer'ble Look," he gasped. "He must have kept that key you let him have once when you had him run the jail. He's got away!"

Cap'n Sproul pondered for a moment; then his face cleared.

"The way to get him to do what you want him to do is to make him think you want him to do something else," he muttered. "The only thing that worries me now is that he'll change that mind of his and try to break back into jail. But I'm thankful for small favors! He'll prob'ly run far enough so I can get a few hours of peace and comfort."

While he was soliloquizing he was looking the perturbed Mr. Trask up and down, with a gaze that added to the turnkey's uneasiness.

"Trask, he didn't have no key!" he barked suddenly. "He bribed you, and you let him out. You needn't try to lie out of it—I wouldn't believe you under oath." It was an accusation so amazing in its injustice that Mr. Trask could only gurgle inarticulately. "You've been shootin' off your mouth round town the last few hours quite a lot. Now, if I hear one yawp out of you about how them fly-by-nighters escaped out of this jail—*escaped*, you understand—till I tell you the story to swear to, I'll have you sent to State prison for takin' bribes whilst on duty. I'm goin' to bed. Be careful that you don't let any one break into this jail!"

"Well, if any such orders as that last was ever give off to a turnkey before," mused the worried Mr. Trask, left alone on duty, "it ain't been since I knowed anything about jails."

Unfortunately, Cap'n Sproul's plan did not solve difficulties as happily as he expected when he went to bed.

The Reminiscences of Katie, a Servant Girl

As Told to Anne O'Hagan

II.

THE ROMANTIC OLD MAIDS

WITH the way I was feelin' an' all, after Mrs. Amory's, I didn't feel as if I'd ever bear it to take service again in this country. An' I didn't feel much as if I could bear it to go to Joey's an' to tell it all to Annie, my sister-in-law. I was sure she'd make it out to be somehow my own fault. I asked Mrs. Kilgore could she be lettin' me bide with her a few days till I felt myself again, an' that I'd pay her well. An' she told me she'd be pleased enough to have me stay for company a little while.

She was lonesome, times, she said, since she'd come over; an' that was only a year back, when her son, Bernard, had sent for her. She was proud an' proud of him, an' of all he did for her; an' I think she might well be, for he let her want nothin', an', when he was off from workin', he'd take her about an' show her the sights, an' never be a bit ashamed that she looked quaint an' queer in her old-country clothes. Times when she sat at home with the work all done, she'd always have her crochet in her hand, makin' lace, like she'd learned to do at home.

"Though what I'd be doin' it for, I don't know," she said. "The stores where they'd buy it, I can't bear to sell it to; it makes me that uneasy to give it for so little, an' know that they're gettin' so much for it. But I'd like to be sellin' it, too. I want some money of my own to be buyin' a present for Bernard."

An' that was the way of it all the

time I stayed with her—always something "for Bernard."

They both said I must go over to Joey's, an' tell him what had happened to me. An' when I showed I was a little afraid to face my sister-in-law, Mrs. Kilgore said she's come with me to explain things, so that Annie'd see no blame was mine. An', the afternoon we went, Mrs. Kilgore all neat an' nice, but not lookin' like the ladies we met on the cars an' ferries, it just so fell out that Annie was havin' grand company—a stout lady in black satin, an' another one, that was stouter, in a fine white lace waist an' a black lace skirt, an' the both of them with flowered hats to their heads.

I liked Mrs. Kilgore's cap an' hood, myself; it looked so nice an' homey-like; but Annie didn't. An' she showed it! An' the minit her fine company was gone, she called me out into the kitchen an' said she'd thank me not to be makin' her a laughin' stock among respectable people; that her friends was rich ladies an' fashionable, bein', one of them a contractor's wife, whose husband could be a deal of help to Joey, an' the other a brewer's wife that could buy and sell all Ballyhogue, an' Conconough if she'd be troublin' herself with such God-forsaken places.

I told Annie she needn't be afraid of my puttin' her to shame again, for I'd never step foot over her sill, an' she could tell my brother what I said—that I'd come no more to a house where people that had done me kindness were



It just so fell out that Annie was havin' grand company.

not treated right; that in Ballyhogue we wouldn't treat a strange beggar so, much less an old woman that had been kind to our own. An' then I flounced off with Mrs. Kilgore, very hot an' sore against my sister-in-law. An', if Mrs. Kilgore suspected anything, she never let on. She wasn't one to make you feel uncomfortable.

But scarce had we got home again to Mrs. Kilgore's flat, an' she was makin' us a cup of tea—to think that Annie never offered us bite nor sup!—when my brother, Joey, came in, scared an' eager. He'd come home after we'd left, an' he made out that I had been in trouble, an' he'd come hotfoot to the Amorys—I hadn't left any address with Annie—an' had learned all about it, an' had come after me. An' he said I was to come home with him; that I was never to mind Annie an' her ways, that wasn't like the old-country ways, an' that while he had a roof over his head, I'd never want for one. It warmed my heart to hear him!

An' Mrs. Kilgore, too, she nodded her wise old head, an' she told me afterward that he talked the way she liked to hear a man talk. But, just the same, she was glad I said no, I'd stay with her, an' get a new place from there, but that I wouldn't be bad friends with Annie any longer, an' would come over the next Sunday afternoon, an' would write him a postal as soon as I found a place. "Young married people is best to themselves, my dear," she said.

It was the next day I found my job. You may be sure, ma'am, I was on my guard against ladies that looked as if they had much jewelry at home, an' a lady that would mislay or forget anything—I'd have gone as soon to one that was stark, rarin' crazy. Mrs. Doran, the first day I was back an' told her why I had left, went straight to the telephone, an' called up Mrs. Amory's; an' I think she couldn't have been pleased with what she heard. For she came back, an' said she'd have to ask further. An' I plucked up my

courage, an' asked her would she please ask Mr. Amory then, for my mind mis-gave me that Mrs. Amory wouldn't be just to me at her own expense. Afterward, I found out she had said: "We don't care to make any charges against the girl, for we discovered the bracelet after she left the house." But Mr. Amory told the whole of the truth. Isn't it funny that a lady could be so mean to a girl that was to earn her livin'? Just not wantin' to admit that she was flighty, an' careless, an' half-seas-over with sleepin' medicines, an' preferrin' that they should think me a thief that had managed not to be found out.

Well, the second day I was at Mrs. Doran's, her young lady clerk comes into the room where the girls are sittin' around, an' she looks us all over, an' then she comes to me, an' says: "Katie, how do you think you'd like a general-housework place? Plain cookin'," she says, "an' all the washin' done out?"

I sort of hesitated, an' one of the girls I had been speakin' with that mornin' made a sign to me behind Miss Honor's back—Miss Honor is Mrs. Doran's assistant—not to take it. But I was sort of anxious to be workin' again, an' I said: "Well, I don't know. It might be too much work for—"

"We've supplied the ladies with girls these three years now, an' the girls have always liked the place. You'd better go in an' talk with the lady," said Miss Honor; an' I went.

At first, I thought she was a young lady, as I saw her sittin' with her back to the window; she held herself kind of young, an' she was slim an' dressy—the nice sort of dressy that so many ladies in New York are, very fine but very plain; an' very, very trim an' trig. But, when I came close enough to see her face clear, I saw that her hair was all crinkled with white—it was black hair to start, an' still was a good deal more black than gray—an' that there were just lots of little lines around the corners of her eyes.

"This is Katie, Miss Robinson," said

Miss Honor, an' Miss Robinson smiled, an' then I saw the two deep lines around her mouth were not lines of crossness at all, an' that all the little bird tracks out from the corners of her eyes might have been made with laughin'.

She spoke, energetic an' busy, the way that lots of American ladies speak, an' what she said was:

"I'll tell you at once what we want, an' then you can tell me whether you'll fit the requirements. There are three of us in the family—three women. We are all business women an' are out all day. We want a girl to cook our meals—we like simple food—keep our house clean—it's a seven-room-an'-bath apartment, steam heated, with hot-water supply—an' wait on the table. We have to have a girl we can trust, an' one that we like; we don't want to be bothered with the friction of a disagreeable personality around. We give twenty dollars a month, every Thursday an' every other Sunday afternoon out. How do you think you'd like the place? An' could you fill it?"

"I—I've never cooked, except at home," said I, "but I think I could do plain cookin'. An' I'm sure I could do the rest." I sort of liked Miss Robinson's looks. I knew she'd never forget where she laid her things down.

Well, the upshot of the whole thing was that the next mornin' I went down to their apartment, an' set to work. Miss Robinson—she was a sort of teacher or something at a place called a Settlement—was at home to install me, she said. The other ladies had gone to their work. She told me what to get for dinner, showed me my room—it was as dark as your pocket, an' about as big, but they had fixed it up as neat an' bright as they knew how, with a white iron bedstead about as wide as a coffin, an' a white-painted chest of drawers, scarce bigger than the big doll's bureau at the Amorys', an' a lookin'-glass, an' a set of hooks under two white-painted shelves, with a bright-flowered cretonne curtain hanging down from them, an' a tiny white table an' a white chair that they

could barely get in the room, an' a picture of the Blessed Virgin, only it was not in colors, like the one at home, cut out of a paper, but was dark. But the frame was white. In spite of bein' so dark, itself—the room—it all looked sort of nice.

The kitchen wasn't much bigger, an' the gas range an' set tubs took up a good deal of space. But the ladies had done all they could there to make things comfortable, too, an' you couldn't help your heart warmin' to people that thought enough of their help to go to so much pains. The walls were painted a cheerful color of blue, instead of that dreary green you generally see in flat kitchens; an' there was twinklin' blue-an'-white stuff everywhere. All the skillets an' cookin' things were that blue enamel, even the water kettle. An' there was blue-an'-white linoleum on the floor, an' more shelves on the wall than what I had ever seen before. An' a great big sort of case on the walls with blue-an'-white china jars of different sizes, holdin' everything. I've been in many a rich kitchen not half so convenient. There was a table, too, that folded down against the wall with brackets, when it wasn't in use. An' on the kitchen window, lookin' out on the fire escape, there was a red geranium. I couldn't keep back a smile when I saw it, it was so bright an' perky. An' when Miss Robinson saw me smile at it, she said, pleasant-like:

"I knew you'd like flowers, Katie, as soon as I saw you. That is why I got that plant. You'll always find, if we get along together, that we are willin' to do our share toward makin' you comfortable an' happy."

Well, I didn't know what to say, so I didn't say anything. I never felt very comfortable, talkin' to ladies. Well, she pointed out cook books to me, an' cookin' magazines, an' showed me how to find things in them, an' then she went off. My, but that was a lonesome day! The rooms were all neat an' fixed when I came, so that there wasn't any sweepin' or dustin' or bed-makin' to make me forget how still it was, an' how long the minutes were,

an' how loud the clock ticked. By an' by, I made up my mind to clean the ice chest, just to pass the time. An' it helped a good deal. I searched till I found a jar of washin' soda, an' I drew plenty of hot water—it just came gushin' an' boilin' out of the pipes—an' I thought it was the grandest thing I'd ever seen; they hadn't it at the Amory's. Well, I cleaned that ice chest until it was as sweet as fresh butter; I couldn't have done it harder if Sister Mary Regina herself was goin' to come by an' look it all over, through those sharp spectacles of hers. She was a wonder on findin' corners you hadn't cleaned or hadn't dried, sister was.

Well, all the ladies came home at night, an' they were all very pleasant. There was one of them fat, with a double chin an' a wide waist. Her name was Miss Oliver, an' she drew pictures on a paper for a livin'. She wore a white shirt-waist, an' I wondered why she did it, for it made her look as broad as a barn door. But she didn't seem to care much about how she looked, so long as she was clean an' comfortable. It certainly made me laugh, after I had come to know what paper she drew for, to see her pictures in it; they were all signed, "Peggy Barnum," an' they were all of ladies that were just angels in looks—slim as reeds an' as graceful, with hair blowin' seven-ways-for-Sunday, an' whirly clothes, all trains an' ruffles an' high heels an' low necks an' bracelets. About as much like Miss Oliver as like me. But I couldn't help wonderin' if she didn't have a kind of hankerin' after that sort of figure an' clothes an' looks, an' work it out in her pictures instead of tryin' to make herself fit it.

The third lady was another Miss Robinson, a cousin to my first Miss Robinson, an' she was tall an' rather sparer than she needed to be for good looks, an' kind of brusque an' impersonal in her manner. She was like my Miss Robinson, doin' some kind of work for the poor, as far as I could make out from what they said; like findin' out what they ate an' why they ate it, an' whether they were poor be-

cause their husbands drank, or whether their husbands drank because they were poor; an' all such things, includin' whether they wouldn't better go to the country. It was an investigator for some commission she was. She used to wear plain cloth clothes, like the first Miss Robinson; an' almost every night she said she was too tired to eat. But generally she got rested by the time dinner was served. I notice that settled ladies generally have an appetite.

with the clothes, an' to one another. Nice, settled, middle-aged ladies they were; the youngest of them—that was my fat Miss Oliver—wasn't under thirty-five, an' the others were two or three, or maybe four, years above it. So that you'll never believe what I am goin' to tell you about them. They were romantic!

It wasn't that any one of them was romantic for herself, as far as I could see. But they were all romantic for



"Nonsense!" said Miss Oliver. "I'll wager Katie has more beaux than she can shake a stick at now!"

Now, I don't believe you'll believe what I'm goin' to tell you, ma'am. They were three as good ladies an' three as nice ladies as I ever saw. In everything they were. They lived nice, though careful; they were refined—candles on the table every night, as well as company nights, flowers in the house sometimes, an' always somethin' green growin'; after-dinner coffee served leisurely-like in the sittin' room—that's the name they called the parlor by; polite, too, to me' an the janitress, an' the woman who came home

one another. One night, a gentleman investigator of that commission I was tellin' you about—a tall, thin, light-eyed young man with a long neck an' a short collar—came home to dinner with Miss Robinson. I give you my word, ma'am, I wouldn't have looked at him twice myself, he was so spindlin' in his looks, an' in his talk, too, as far as I could hear it, waitin' on the table. But if you'll believe me, the first Miss Robinson an' Miss Oliver came out into the kitchen about half-past nine, an' giggled an' said to me:

"May we stay here, Katie? We want to be out of earshot, an' this is about the only room in the flat where we could be." An' I said if they wouldn't mind the noise of the dishes. An' they sat an' talked in words they thought I couldn't understand about Miss Louise Robinson, the investigator one, an' that young man, who wasn't more than twenty-five. "Distinctly interested," was one word they used. An' "She'll never think of such a thing." An' "Then she ought to be careful how she lets him come—an impressionable type!" If they were talkin' about that Mr. Vorhees, I could have told them that the only thing he was much impressed with was what a lot he knew. But that's the way they sat there an' talked, those two grown women. An', at about ten minutes of ten, out comes Miss Louise Robinson, sort of yawnin', so as to cover up whatever her face was showin'.

"Why did you girls run away?" she asked.

"What, he's not gone?" the other two said.

"He certainly is. I couldn't talk all night to him, you know," she answered. "He left his good nights for you both."

"Poor boy! Why did you send him away so early? When he had his first chance to speak to you, too?" said Miss "Peggy Barnum" Oliver.

"He didn't want to see me alone," said Miss Louise. But you could see on her face that she wanted the other two to think that he *had* wanted to see her alone. "Come on, we mustn't be corruptin' Katie, here, with idle talk an' puttin' silly ideas into her head."

"Nonsense!" said Miss Oliver, the "Peggy" one. "I'll wager Katie has more beaux than she can shake a stick at now!"

I got sort of hot about my ears, an' they all laughed, an' called out: "See her blush!" But I was blushin' for hearin' them talk like that, not for any beaux I had. An' I said that, indeed, I wasn't concerned with company yet a while, an' I asked them had the flaked fish in the little ramikins been satis-

factory. I had cooked it extra after Miss Louise had telephoned that she was bringin' a guest home to dinner. They said it was all right, an' very nice, indeed, an' that it had been good of me to fix it, an' all like that. They were always generous about praisin' anything you did for them, an' were very gentle about findin' fault when things went wrong; that I will say for them.

An' then they took themselves out of my kitchen, an' I heard them chat-terin' in the sittin' room an hour after, when I was goin' to bed. An' if they weren't talkin' about marryin' late in life, as sober as a lot of judges! It seemed that some friends of theirs, named Browning, had done it; an' had been very happy—so happy that they'd published a book of their love letters—oh, not their friends, but poets? An' didn't publish their own love letters, but their son did. Well, ma'am, that proves that they oughtn't to have been married, whenever they were, if their son would do that to them! Anyway, my three ladies were talkin' away about them when I went in to put the silver basket behind the gas log in the fireplace. It wasn't lit, an' they thought it was a grand hidin' place.

Well, pretty soon my Miss Robinson that had engaged me had her turn. It wasn't quite so silly, that time. It seems that she had been engaged to be married when she was a young girl, but that it had been broken off; an', by an' by, her young man he naturally married some one else. She had lived out West in Ohio or Iowa or some queer-soundin' place when she was young. Well, her young man had taught in a college back there, a college with a funny name, too. An' he an' she had always had what I heard her tell the others was "an intellectual sympathy," so he'd sent her his books; he wrote some, an' she kept them in her own room on a shelf on the wall, not on the sittin'-room shelves. However, as long as she didn't keep them on the little table beside her bed where she always had a queer book named "Marcus Aurelius" an' a Bible an' a late novel—

which never was as dusty as the other two—I didn't think it was so serious, her keepin' his books in her room. It was more like she was tryin' to make out that they were something private an' sort of dear, than that they really were.

Well, it seems the professor's wife had died a couple of years ago. An' from what I heard them sayin', my

had been "the one big experience of her life, however she had lived it down," an' all sorts of things that ladies talk. An' the long an' short of it was that he was comin' to New York that spring, an' she was goin' to see him.

We had more fuss about the dinner that first night he was asked for, than if it had been King Edward was comin'. Miss Madge came home early



When Miss Madge got home earlier than the others she used to sit at the piano in the half-light, an' play.

Miss Robinson had not seen him since. Miss "Peggy" an' Miss Louise Robinson, talkin' it over once when Miss Robinson wasn't at home, said that "Madge had behaved noble; that she feared to give him the slightest ground for thinkin' the early fondness had survived, an' so she wouldn't see him when he had passed through on his way to Europe." An' they talked about "would it mean anything to her now," an' about there bein' no doubt that it

from work an' fussed about the kitchen. I'll not deny that all the ladies were very good about little things in the cooking way, but they had taught me all they knew, an' I could do it to suit them, an' it did make me nervous to have them fussin' around.

However, you can't often order a lady out of her own kitchen, an' Miss Madge bothered around there the whole afternoon. First she wanted to make mayonnaise, an' I told her I had

made it after breakfast. Then she said she would skin the tomatoes it was to go onto, an' I told her they were skinned an' on the ice. Then it was the freezin' she thought she'd do, but I told her I had made a mousse of the canned peaches, an' it had been packed an hour an' more.

She looked so sort of forlorn, poor lady, at not findin' anything to do, that I said to her maybe she wouldn't mind puttin' fresh candles in the holders, an' were we to have the fern, or some flowers, in the centre? An' she went out as soon as she'd fixed the candles, an' bought a lot of carnations an' mignonette an' fern, an' fixed it in the cut-glass berry bowl.

The table did look lovely, an' nothin' could have been tastier than the dinner, if I do say it myself. The three ladies always had their food nice. Miss Louise said it was their duty to eat nourishin', appetizin' food, but Miss Peggy, she said she "had reached a time of life when she didn't feel called upon to apologize for her appetite or for a decent discrimination in viands." She was a funny talker sometimes, Miss "Peggy."

Well, that professor arrived a little while before seven. The ladies had invited another gentleman in that evening—a dramatic critic, I think he was, from the paper Miss Oliver made pictures for. They were all dressed up, even Miss "Peggy," an' they did look nice, in their low necks, with their hair sort of fluffed out, an' everything. An', as I said, the professor came in about a quarter before seven; he wore a brownish-colored business suit, an' he looked queer when he saw how my ladies were dressed. He said something, but they passed it off pleasant, an' even made it easy for him when the critic gentleman came in, all stiff-an'-shinin' shirt bosom, an' long black tails, an' small white tie. But, just the same, I know Miss Madge didn't relish her old beau's comin' like that.

Well, whether it was because he felt that he wasn't dressed up enough to make an impression that way, or what, that professor set out to be different

from the others right away. He had a sort of moth-eaten beard, an' he was gettin' bald on the top of his head, an' he looked to me like a man who knows he's got a stomach by the trouble it gives him. So I wasn't surprised to see him push aside the plate that his little glass of clam cocktail stood on. Miss Madge looked unhappy when she saw it.

He ate the soup—he couldn't have helped it, if I do say it. It was as clear as amber an' as brown as coffee, an' it had the best dozen flavors in the world, so mixed that you couldn't be sure of any one of them—browned onion an' carrot an' a tiny bit of bay leaf an' celery an' parsley an' a thimble full of sherry. Anybody that could pass that soup by would have been just plain crazy. But the professor passed his finger roll, that we'd ordered extra from Maroni's, an' didn't touch the smelts, with tartar sauce. The critic did, though; it was a pleasure to watch that man eat what you'd cooked—it was such a compliment to you.

Miss Madge looked dreadful uncomfortable when the professor pushed aside the smelts a little, an' went on talkin' about a gentleman named "Emanuel Kant." He used his full name almost every time he spoke of him, an' it seemed like he thought every one ought to agree with what this Mr. Kant had said about something. Miss Madge tried to switch him off now an' then to something the dramatic critic knew; the dramatic critic said, early in the talk, that he had put Kant away in lavender eighteen years before, when he came out of college, an' had never had occasion to look at him since; I don't know just what he meant. Well, when the professor wouldn't eat his smelts, Miss Madge switched him off from his friend long enough to say:

"You have not brought any appetite with you."

"Oh, yes, indeed," said the professor. "I never eat fish, that is all. I found out that it disagreed with me when——"

I was carryin' out the fish course then, an' I lost the date when the professor had found that fish disagreed with him. The critic an' Miss "Peggy" were talkin' about some one named Lou Fields, an' Miss Louise Robinson was lookin' at the professor as though she were sayin': "Poor Madge! An' is this the hero of her life?"

I felt real sorry for Miss Madge, especially when I came in with the roast chicken an' vegetables, an' the professor didn't touch a thing but the spinach. She was so unhappy then that he had to make some kind of explanation, an' it came out that he didn't eat much of anything; whole wheat bread an' peanut butter, with spinach an' beans, or something about like that. An' he was one of those chewers, too. It was awful, an' it was pitiful to see Miss Madge.

You'd have thought that was enough, wouldn't you? But the poor lady was, at heart, romantic, an' when she found out the next day that her old beau had really come to New York to ask her to marry him, an' all, she actually told him to give her a little time. An' those three blessed ladies sat up, an' actually discussed it. One would sigh, an' say: "A woman who misses marriage misses one of life's big experiences." They were forever talkin' about "big experiences." An' another said there was no doubt that he was a gentleman an' a scholar, an' that it would be a pleasant, intellectual society at Wherever-It-Was.

An' when Miss Madge got home earlier than the others, she used to sit at the piano in the half light, an' play, an' I knew she was tryin' to make herself feel the way she'd felt nineteen or twenty years before, when the professor was first around. I just ached to tell her that he wasn't the same—I guess he had his appetite then, an' knew about some one besides that Emanuel.

Well, one Sunday the other two ladies went out to the country. Miss Madge stayed home, I think, because the professor was to come an' see her about four o'clock. She offered to let

me out for the day—it was my Sunday in—but I didn't like to leave her mopin' around, an' probably not eatin' anything, so I stayed home. I cooked her up a fine little lunch that would put some heart into her, a cup of tomato bisque, with a bit of bread stick, a French chop, a lettuce salad—just two white, firm little hearts, with the kind of dressin' she herself taught me to make—an' a tiny cheese soufflé.

She helped me with the dishes after luncheon. They were all kind ladies in that way, or meant to be; for myself I'd rather be let alone in my kitchen, to do my work my own way; if it doesn't suit, let the lady tell me.

Anyway, she was helpin' me that Sunday, an' I was talkin' to her about Mollie, the baby, an' Big Barney, an' Little Mike, an' all at home. An' about old Mrs. Kilgore, an' she said she'd be glad to buy some Irish crochets from her. But she only half listened, most of the time. An', by an' by, she was askin' me, sort of shylike, did I leave any lover at home, an' did I think I would like him as well after I'd been out here a while. I saw what she meant in a minute, an' I laughed, kind of conscious-like.

"If I had left one," said I, "an' he came after me soon enough, before I was different, maybe I'd like him as well. But, sure, if he wasn't comin' for five or ten years, I wouldn't be the same person, an' no more would he. An' we'd be the pair of fools to marry just for the old sake's sake; it would be in the future our lives would be lived, an' our feelin's would be in the past."

I saw she gave a start, an' she looked at me more keenlike.

"So that's your opinion!" she laughed. "An' yet you look like one of those Irish colleens I read about—soft an' faithful an' lovin'."

"You mustn't believe all you read, Miss Madge," said I. "Suppose I had left a lover back there. An' suppose, when I've settled here this long time, an' have my friends all about me, an' my work that I can do, an' do well, an' all my little ways. Suppose I'm

used to fresh meat more than once a month, an' suppose I read the papers an' books, an' go sometimes to the theatre. An' suppose he comes, hat in hand, to ask me back with him—back to a cabin, with a dirt floor an' a thatch roof, an' pitaties an' pitaties, with now an' then a sup of buttermilk to wash them down, an' mush, an' sometimes a bit of pork—an' him knowin' naught of what I know then, an' carin' naught, Miss Madge, an' carin' naught; only comin' after me because he thought he had an old fondness to do his lovmakin' for him, but with no fresh wit to do it for himself—don't you think I'd be the big fool to go back with him?"

She was laughin' an' lookin' at me hard an' sharp.

"It's rank heresy, what you're sayin'," she said. "You know a woman who doesn't marry misses a big experience."

"An' what's that?" I asked, stupid-like.

"Why, bein' a wife, of course." She stared at me, sort of surprised.

"Well, she that marries misses another big experience," I said to her, "an' that's bein' an—old maid. An experience is an experience," I told her. "An' she that marries a man misses the experience of goin' through life alone, be that experience bitter or sweet. An' I've no manner of doubt that one experience will balance with another when we come to the last."

"Katie," she said, throwin' down the dish towel. "You're as great a philosopher as Emanuel Kant, an' a good deal more to the point."

"Ma'am?" said I, stupid-like.

"Bring me in my tea with toasted English muffins, swimmin' in hot butter," she says to me, "at four-thirty. No matter who is callin'."

But it was only the dramatic critic who was there at four-thirty, for the professor had telephoned that he had a slight chill an' thought he would not risk increasin' it, but that he'd come the next day, if convenient. An' she telephoned back that she was sorry she had an engagement the next day. An'

that night I mailed a letter to him, an' he didn't come back to the place at all.

The other two ladies, I think, were a little disappointed about it all, an' they were kind of soft an' low-spoken with Miss Madge for a while. But she got back to bein' just like her old self, an' if you'll believe me, before the summer came around, she an' the dramatic critic decided to get married in the fall.

Why did I ever leave a place that I seemed to like so well, you ask me, ma'am? Well, I suppose it was a little thing, an' many's the time between then an' now I've told myself I was a fool for my pains. But the truth was, the ladies were too kind, an' too interested in me. It's an uncommon failin', you think, ma'am? Well, so it is. But it's a failin'. You see, they'd talk about the pleasure of "havin' a bit of young life in the house"—that was me, ma'am. An' I'd hear them, an' it always made me feel uncomfortable; I wasn't "a bit of young life," I was the cook an' general housework girl at twenty a month.

An' when a cousin I have in this country came one evenin' to see me, they all thought it was a beau, an' they made me ashamed for myself before Cornelius, with their smilin', an' their sendin' a box of candy out to the kitchen. An' once, when Policeman Kilgore came down—not in his uniform, ma'am, but on a time off—they came an' asked me wouldn't I like to see my friend in the dinin' room; makin' him think I thought anything special of his comin', an' that when he'd only come with a message from his mother, anyway! An' there was so much smilin' an' lookin' arch an' knowin'—it was enough to make the man think I was thinkin' of him! So, when they go away for the summer vacation, I tell them I guess I'll be findin' a new place.

Sometimes I go to see them yet. They were all nice ladies. My Miss Madge, that married the dramatic critic, lives out in a suburb across the river, an' I don't get to see her often. But I'll bet she isn't as romantic in her notions as she used to be!

A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE

-BY-
**ALLAN
UPDEGRAFF**

ILLUSTRATED BY
ROBT. A. GRAEF



A PILE of lumber had been left on one side of the big concrete pier, about halfway out, and on the sunny side of this a man was drowsing. His most conspicuous articles of clothing were a square-topped, brown derby hat, cracked patent leather shoes, and a bright blue coat, the collar of which was suggestively turned up around his neck. His name was Pudge Doskins; at least, his name had been Pudge Doskins for almost two months. His profession was picking pockets.

A fat policeman appeared at a street corner, two blocks away, and Pudge, although to all appearances, half asleep, immediately evidenced an uneasy movement along his spine, which might have been construed as an attempt to identify himself more completely with the pile of lumber against which he sat. The policeman, after standing a moment with his arms folded across his chest, turned, and went back the way he had come. Pudge drew a philosophical breath of relief.

"I tell you what," he admonished himself, after the manner of a man accustomed to be much alone, "you've got to make up your mind one way or the other, and beat it. There's half a dozen cops around here who'd pinch you on

sight, just for luck. This is no proper place——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted a thin voice near his ear, "but could I disturb you long enough to reach Theophrastus Paracelsus down for me?"

A bucket of cold water could scarcely have wrought greater havoc with his self-possession. The small lady who was responsible obligingly disregarded his confusion and astonishment. She stood, very calm and demure, at the end of the lumber pile nearest him, her hands clasped upon her short, fluffy skirt.

"He's perfectly horrid to-day," she elucidated, in her chirrupy little voice. "I can't persuade him to go back into his cage. He's on the top of those boards over there, and I'd be ever so much obliged if you'd just get him down."

Pudge arose unsteadily, and looked in the direction indicated. Fifty feet away, at the farther end of the lumber pile, sat a large magpie. He was pruning himself in cheerful oblivion of the small cage placed, with the door invitingly open, on the pier, a few feet below him. Even two or three soda crackers near the door seemed to offer no attraction.

"Why, certainly," said Pudge, vaguely wondering how long he had been asleep. "I'll get him down for you."

He arose, dusted himself, and started toward the bird.

"You see, Aunt Emma usually comes out with us, and Parry minds her," explained the child, walking beside him. "But she went shopping this afternoon."

"I see," said Pudge. "Then she don't just exactly know you're over here?"

"Well, not exactly," she admitted. "There wasn't anybody at home, except our cook, and she went to sleep. Aunt Emma always takes me over to the park for my airings; but it looked so much more interesting over here. It was very dull at home."

Pudge whistled, and put his hand tentatively toward the bird. It ruffled its feathers, squawked, and snapped at his fingers.

"Why, Parry!" the child reproved him.

Pudge put his hand nearer, and was bitten.

"He don't seem to be long on temper," commented the pickpocket, rubbing the assaulted finger.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" she exclaimed impersonally. "There, we'll just leave him alone till he gets tired. Come over where you were sitting and amuse me."

"I guess I'd better be traveling along, miss," Pudge demurred weakly.

"My name's Marjory," said the child. "I don't like to be called 'miss.' Come on!" She seized his hand, and manoeuvred him to his former seat, Pudge behaving in much the irresponsible manner of a big liner, in the tow of a small, but determined, tug.

As she seated herself beside him with sedate friendliness, the situation began to appeal to that part of his nature which corresponded with his original name of Patrick O'Halloran. He noticed her grown-up, authoritative air with amusement, and rightly attributed it to her having lived only with older people, who spoiled her. She inspired him not less with wonder; her hands were so inconceivably small, her pink-stockinged legs so canelike, her dignified eyes and mouth so microscopic.

And her attitude toward him, in turn, might have tended to disprove many of Lombroso's most erudite conclusions concerning criminals. Her quick intuition found nothing unhealthy, nothing repulsive, about him. Each was as much a stranger to the type represented by the other as they were to each other, personally; and yet, each, through the medium of a certain natural sympathy, had a real and deep knowledge of the other's instincts and tendencies; a knowledge which, although subconscious, was very well fitted to serve as a foundation for attitudes and actions.

"Are you a sailor?" Marjory asked abruptly.

"I am not," replied Pudge.

"What are you, then?"

"I'm out of a job, just at present speaking."

"That's too bad. Have you tried to get one?"

"I certainly have. But people are getting so careful of their money these hard times." He looked at her with an expression of mock pathos.

"I don't believe you've tried very hard," she announced. "Have you tried prayer?"

"Have I—— Did you say, have I——"

"Have you tried prayer?" she repeated, evidently annoyed at his difficulty in understanding a perfectly simple question.

"Well—you see—no. I must have forgot it."

"You should try it."

"Sure, maybe I should," admitted Pudge, recovering his self-possession. "But I've about come to the conclusion that prayer is meant for things like grace, and forgiveness, and such like. F'r instance, if I was after movin' a mountain, I'd ruther use dynamite."

"But you don't want to move a mountain; you want a job."

"True for you! And do you really think prayer 'ud help?"

"I'm sure it would. It will do anything."

"Well, comin' down to my case," he continued genially, "if I was hungry and prayed for a big, thick slice of

bread, covered with nice yeller country butter—the kind that tastes like more—do you think I'd get it?"

"Are you hungry?"

"I sure am—for the sort o' stuff I'm mentionin'."

"Fine! Now, for the reason I don't get an aëroplane when I pray for it, is because it's not a necessary of life; but food is. Suppose you pray for that bread and butter, right now, and see if you don't get it."

"Suppose I——"

"Certainly. Pray for it to come—well—over there in the end of the lumber pile, for instance, under Theophrastus Paracelsus. Go on; pray for it."

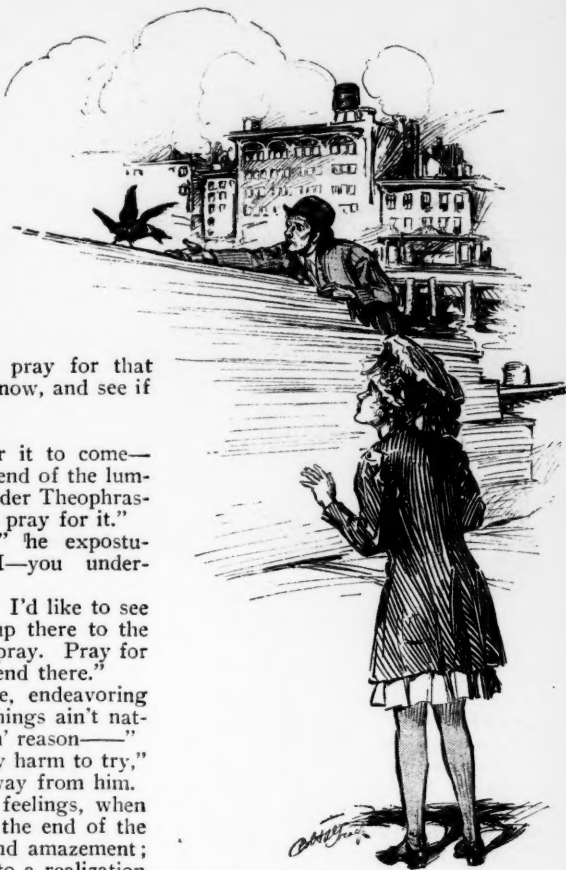
"Well, now—I say!" he expostulated. "You know—I—you understand——"

"Wait just a minute. I'd like to see it come. When I go up there to the other end, you begin to pray. Pray for it to come right in the end there."

"Wait!" called Pudge, endeavoring to detain her. "Such things ain't natural, you know; it's agin' reason——"

"Well, it won't do any harm to try," she returned, darting away from him.

Pudge's predominant feelings, when she disappeared around the end of the pile, were amusement and amazement; but he quickly returned to a realization of his own precarious position. The diverting young lady might be the innocent cause of much trouble for himself. He must get away. First, however, he must decide whether he was going to the races at Belmont Park or the State Fair, at Albany. He had to decide before he could place the "markers," which would convey information of his whereabouts to "Slick Bill" Prout, his partner and instructor in trade. These things flashed confusedly through his mind, and gave way to the realization that his real trouble had not been to decide between these two contingencies,



Pudge put his hand nearer, and was bitten.

but between them and a third; which was, not to leave any markers at all—to shake Bill, as Bill would undoubtedly have shaken him, but for the fact——

"What are you doing?" demanded Marjory, from the end of the lumber pile.

"Wawp! Gee-wawp!" shrieked the magpie, startled out of a doze by her call.

Pudge turned and looked at them with diminished interest. A child and a bird; what had they to do with his



"Why, most assuredly I know him!" she responded, growing in indignation.

dilemma? If he deserted Bill, who had certainly used him as a scapegoat in more than one instance, he might go to Chicago, or San Francisco, where he was not known. He might even find honest work there. The ups and downs of thievery were not all—

"You must shut your eyes," commanded Marjory, who had been peering at him from around the end of the lumber pile. "And, perhaps it would be better if you got on your knees."

"Oh, I don't think that's necessary," returned Pudge, distracted into smiling, in spite of himself.

"Well, Aunt Emma says it isn't, especially in public," admitted the child. "But shut your eyes, anyway, and pray your very hardest!"

Pudge smilingly obeyed the first part of her injunction. It gave him a better chance to think. There was still another possibility; employment on a

stony little farm, up in Vermont, a farm owned by an old man named Michael O'Halloran. That old man would be glad to see him; and so would an old woman, the old man's wife. He shook the thought from him as weak and sentimental. Besides, to leave the lights, the crowds, the joy of being an atom in the big turmoil; to give up the occasional bursts of opulence, the "swell" clothes, the nights at theatres and cafés! He shook his head.

"You're down on your luck, and you're ready to crawlfish," he told himself. "It's the Albany trick, for yours. You're in the game, and you've got to stay."

He arose to his feet, feeling himself as thoroughly in the grip of fate as ever man felt before him. Marjory was still peering at him around the end of the pile, and when he arose, she came slowly toward him.

"The experiment has not been altogether successful," she announced, avoiding his eyes, and seeming troubled. "Perhaps you didn't need the food badly enough; or perhaps you didn't pray as hard as you might. But, at any rate, there is sufficient to show the power of prayer."

She sat down on the projecting boards she had formerly occupied, bending her head to avoid his gaze.

"Go to the end of the pile," she continued slowly, "and look on the tenth board from the bottom, and the fourth from this side."

Pudge was about to make a facetious reply, but he reflected that he would have an opportunity to place his "markers" unobserved, and desisted.

"All right," he said.

He did not stop to look at the spot she had indicated, but, screened by the lumber, went quickly over to the edge of the pier. Huge timbers were bolted against the concrete side, to form a bumper for the hulls of boats. Between these timbers and the concrete was a narrow crack, filled with a deposit of dust and sand. Drawing from a coat pocket three bits of mica, about as large as dimes, Pudge pressed them into the crack, until they were almost covered. When he had finished, he hesitated some moments before rising. He even went so far as to lift out one of the shiny bits, and hold it for a moment in his hand. But his former determination prevailed, and he put it back.

"What's done's done," he said, getting to his feet.

"Wawp! Wawp! Gee-wawp!" replied the magpie.

"Thanks for reminding me," said Pudge. "Before I go, I'll just have another try at getting you down."

He wrapped his handkerchief around his hand for protection, and reached toward the bird.

"Wawp! Gee-wawp!" repeated the magpie angrily, sidling out of reach.

With the intention of climbing up on the pile, he looked down for a projection on which to place his foot. There was a suitable projection, but, some-

what to his astonishment, it was covered by three big, square soda crackers.

The longer he looked at the crackers, the more remarkable he seemed to find them. Whistling softly between his teeth, he bent down, and determined the location of the board. It was the tenth from the top, and the fourth from the side on which he had been sitting. Still whistling, he glanced around the end of the pile at the magpie's cage. The crackers had disappeared. Whistling ceased adequately to express his feelings. In amazed, open-mouthed amusement, he glanced from crackers to cage, and back again.

"What a kid! What a kid!" he murmured. "Sure, and she's gone and fixed up her own private miracle!"

Marjory danced suddenly around the edge of the pile.

"I've got a perfectly splendid plan!" she cried.

The sight of the crackers seemed to recall circumstances long since past and forgotten. She was momentarily embarrassed.

"Oh, those!" she ejaculated, hastily gathering them up, and tossing them into the water. "Nasty old things! Never mind them! I'll tell you what I'm going to do: I'm going to have Aunt Emma give you Tom's job!"

"You will what?" queried Tom, mystified by her actions, as much as by her words.

"I'll have Aunt Emma give you Tom's job. He tends to the furnace, and lots of things, you know. He's not nice. I don't like him. I'll just have Aunt Emma make him go away, and you can be our Tom!"

"But, you see, I say, now——" began Pudge, weakly prefacing another objection.

"Please consider it definitely arranged," interrupted Marjory. "You can have that piece of bread and butter as soon as we get home; and you'll have a job, too. We will consider it—definitely arranged!"

Any thought of reply was banished from Pudge's consciousness by his sudden perception of a policeman coming toward them, less than half a block

away. For one desperate moment, he thought of trying to bolt. Second thought, however, convinced him that the policeman could not possibly have recognized him at that distance, even if the officer was one of his acquaintances. Still, the pier was occupied only by himself and the child, and the officer's attention was quite plainly not directed to the group of Italian laborers on the next pier.

"What's the matter?" asked Marjory, noticing the excitement in his face.

"Nothing at all, miss; nothing at all," Pudge assured her. He regarded the oncoming officer narrowly, and added: "I'm very thankful to accept the job you're after offering me. You won't forget that I'm your Tom, will you?"

The policeman began talking while he was still twenty feet distant.

"Don't you try to give her no game!" he called. "I saw you, all right. I'm onto you!"

He came up, puffing stertorously, flushed with anger and exercise. "I saw you tryin' to cop the bird," he panted, securing a grip on Pudge's coat sleeve. "What's he been a-tryin' to give you, miss?"

"What's the matter?" asked Marjory, to whom the officer's talk was almost a foreign language.

"He thinks I was tryin' to steal Par

—phrastus the Celsus," explained Pudge, much relieved. "He thinks I was tryin' to take your bird away from you."

"No guff!" interrupted the policeman. He was examining Pudge's features with minute attention. "I guess I've seen you before," he hazarded.

"I am astonished at you!" cried Marjory, bestowing a glance of withering contempt upon the officer. "I asked him to get Theophrastus Paracelsus down for me. Trying to steal him—the very idea! You ought to blush for shame for harboring such unworthy suspicions!"

"That's all right, Miss Marjory," interposed Pudge, pretending to be amused.

"You keep out o' this," said the officer to Pudge. Nevertheless, he seemed somewhat disconcerted.

"What's your name?" he asked the child.

"Marjory Fleming."

"And you know this man?"

"Why, most assuredly!" she responded, growing in indignation, as she noticed the effect she was producing on the policeman. "Know him! Of course, I know him! The idea! Why, how perfectly inane!"

The policeman was pardonably shaken, but not convinced. The deciding factor, as not infrequently happens, was entirely extraneous to the evidence.



"Now we can go home. Come on."

He looked at his watch. It was four-thirty, and he went off duty at five o'clock. If he took Pudge to headquarters, he would be late to supper.

"I guess I've made a mistake," he said, and walked away.

Marjory saw him go, with some regret.

"He has elegant clothes, hasn't he?" she asked.

"They look better at a distance," returned Pudge, laughing. "Sure, I've not seen anything handsomer than the back of them for a long time."

"But, to think, he accused you of trying to steal Parry!" she resumed indignantly.

She stepped back, and extended her small person in an effort to look on top of the pile of lumber.

"Why, he's gone!" she cried.

"He's not far off, I guess," returned Pudge, stepping around the end of the pile.

The magpie, left to himself, had seized the opportunity to come down from his perch. He was standing close to the edge of the pier, chuckling to himself and pecking at several small, bright objects. Pudge recognized his "markers." He started forward, but the bird, dexterously catching all three of the mica bits in its beak, scrambled to safety on the top of the lumber pile.

"What has he got?" asked Marjory.

"I don't exactly know," replied Pudge, staring at the magpie. "And that ain't nothing but the gospel truth," he added. "It may be just some scraps of mica he's got; ag'in, it may be me bad luck, and, still ag'in, it may be me dead past. He's a ver-ry intelligent burr-rud, so he is!"

Still holding its booty in its beak, the magpie clambered down the other side of the lumber pile, and into its cage, on the floor of which, with many cluckings of delight, it deposited the "markers." Marjory tiptoed up and shut the door.

"I don't know what he's got," she said, "but, anyway, we've got him. Now we can go home. Come on."

She held out her hand with friendliness that was at the same time a command.

Pudge looked at her quizzically, and shook his head.

"I'm sorry, clear down to my heels, Miss Marjory," he said, "but I'm obliged to tell you that when I said I'd take the job, it was so we could get rid of that policeman, do you see? They're a queer lot, those coppers; they know so much that they can always tell you're lyin' when you're tellin' the truth, so you simply got to lie to 'em to make 'em believe you. I hope you'll understand how 'tis and forgive me. I'd be tickled stiff to take the job, only I've got to go out of town this evenin' on business, ver-ry importhant business."

The objection seemed to strike her as far more conclusive than he had hoped. She seemed crestfallen and disappointed.

"Oh, bother!" she sighed. "That's what father's always saying. Well, I suppose it can't be helped."

Pudge picked up the cage, and they walked in silence across the wide street, then two blocks up a side street. When Marjory indicated her house, less than a block away, Pudge stopped, and put out his hand.

"Good-by, and good luck go wi' ye!" he said.

"Good-by," she replied lugubriously. "I think business is perfectly horrid!"

"Mine sure is," agreed Pudge. "Or, maybe I should be sayin'—it was."

He bowed low, with the brown derby pressed to the part of his blue coat that covered his heart. Several by-passers looked at them curiously.

"Good-by!" he repeated, handing her the magpie's cage, and turning away.

When he had gone thirty or forty paces, he glanced back over his shoulder. Marjory was looking back, also, and she waved her hand at him. Pudge waved his hat.

"Just for that," he murmured, "I'll make it Vermont!"

Two ferryboats passed slowly up the river, side by side, and the golden light of the evening sun fell over them, and over the big concrete piers.

"For a while, at least," he added.

THE CASE *of* HERACLES

By
Helen Champion
Green

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU



HEPWORTH gazed savagely at the dog and the dog gazed stolidly back at Hepworth. On the part of Hepworth there were fierce resentment, jealousy, and hatred; on the part of the dog, contemptuous indifference. The dog's name was Heracles, and he did not live up to his name. He was fat and frowsy and ill-natured, and his mistress loved him with all of her misled, capricious heart. That was why Hepworth hated the dog, and the dog pitied Hepworth.

The dog had known that Hepworth was coming to call that afternoon, for Miss Cecelia had tied under his collar a new, big red bow, that bothered his ears until he had succeeded in scratching it around under his chin, where it had come untied, and now hung down, and he stepped on it. He was not a very large dog, and the bow was all out of proportion to his small dimensions. But he knew that when the new bow was tied on, it was preliminary to being carried downstairs into the drawing-room, and presented, as an object of never-failing interest, to Hepworth. To-day he had stolen a march, and presented himself before Miss Cecelia herself was ready. And he had walked majestically into the presence of the caller, the

new red bow trailing under his feet, and a sense of unusual importance plainly expressed on his shaggy little countenance. He had an idea that Hepworth was his victim. Dogs are intelligent creatures, and he was not mistaken; Hepworth *was* his victim.

No chaperon, however diligent or forbidding, could have so absolutely banished the possibility of any sentimental passages so effectively as did Heracles. And his attendance was unfailing. He was made the central feature of every greeting, every leave-taking, and the subject of most of the intervening conversation. When they took walks, it was for the benefit of Heracles, and it required their most vigilant attention to see that no harm befell him, or that he was not lost. Heracles understood this, and left the responsibility entirely to them. When they drove, which they did once, and which Hepworth did not suggest a second time, Heracles sat between them, and had excluded all possibility of conversation by a constant yapping, which rendered them both uncomfortably conspicuous, and strangely silent. In fact, Hepworth had found that if he had something he really must say, it was necessary for him to leave town, so that

he might write it to her, and this was inconvenient.

Again and again had he declared that he would stand it no longer, and that the house should know him no more. Once, he had even gone so far as to state his resolution, and its cause, to Cecelia, and the following day had seen him, humble and chastened, begging to be admitted once more into her friendship, and slavishly fondling an unresponsive dog. On Sundays he had formed the habit of appearing regularly with a large bunch of violets, which, to him, formed a happy oasis, for on these occasions there was room for quite a bit of natural conversation, while Cecelia fondly watched her pet conscientiously bite the heads from each of the unhappy flowers. Had Hepworth first met Cecelia and Heracles together, such a condition would never have come about. Alas, Heracles had been spending a few lonely days at a canine hospital, and before his recovery the mischief had been done.

Presently there was the brisk rustle of skirts, a light footfall on the stair, and Cecelia, sweet and radiant, stood before him, with extended hand. He was about to take the hand when it was suddenly withdrawn, and Heracles was gathered up into her arms in a rapturous medley of endearments and scoldings.

"Why, you naughty, naughty!" she exclaimed. "Missie's been looking all over the house for you, and kept Mr. Hepworth waiting all this while, which we know he doesn't like, and here you are, all the time. And, oh, your beautiful bow all untied, and you know, Naughtikins, what a long time it took for Missie to tie it."

She turned, appealing, to Hepworth. "Isn't he just too bad for anything?" she laughed.

"Yes," answered Hepworth unfeelingly. "He is a very bad dog; I've already told you so, many times, but you don't seem to appreciate it."

Cecelia frowned. "Oh, Ned, you're always so literal," she objected indignantly. "He doesn't really mean to be bad; of course, he doesn't, the dear

baby! He just heard you come in, and was so anxious to see you, he simply couldn't wait any longer, so he left me, and came down by himself. I declare," she added laughingly, "if you are going to be such good friends as that, I shall be furiously jealous."

A curious expression stole over Hepworth's face. "I wonder," he said to himself, "I wonder if she would."

He reached out one hand, and drew the shaggy little bundle up beside him. "Why, of course, we are good friends, now that we are really acquainted," he answered. "We didn't quite understand each other, at first, did we, old doggie?" Cecelia gave a little laugh that was like a purr of satisfaction. "By the way, Cecelia," he continued, "do you think he really has exercise enough?"

"Exercise," she exclaimed, "why, he runs all over the house all day, and always has his half-hour walk every afternoon, besides his drive with me in the park."

"I know," he answered doubtfully, "but running about the house is not like out-of-doors exercise, you know, and half an hour isn't very much; these high-breed dogs have to be cared for like children."

His tone was almost reproachful, and Cecelia looked up in surprise.

"I might have a messenger boy," she suggested.

"Oh, my dear Cecelia," he remonstrated, "don't think of such a thing! He would be winning money on dog fights in no time. Never trust a pet to one of those boys; it's the last thing I should dream of doing."

"But," protested Cecelia, and her tone was one of injury, "you know how I hate walking in the city. I think I need a little consideration, myself."

"Oh, of course," he answered quickly, "if you feel that way about it. I simply mentioned it, because I wondered if you knew how necessary exercise really is to keep a dog of that kind in good condition."

For once, he seemed actually loath to introduce other subjects. He was full of suggestion and sympathy, and



"And, oh, your beautiful bow all untied, and you know what a long time it took for Missie to tie it."

he fairly forgot to say a civil good-by to Cecelia, so engrossed was he with the parting antics of his little friend.

When he had gone, Cecelia sat down in grieved surprise. She had not taken Hepworth to be the kind of a man who would make a dog of such monumental importance. It didn't seem to her quite dignified. For a woman, of course, it was quite different; a woman might be allowed her little caprices, but it really showed a lack of something in a man. She was not sure that she had not been foolish about Heracles, herself, and she felt, with a little twinge of conscience, that perhaps she was just the

least bit tired of him. And Heracles, as though perceiving the dangerous turn of her thoughts, stood before her and barked a wrathful denial.

The next day was Sunday, and as Cecelia came downstairs that afternoon, with Heracles under one arm, she had fairly forgotten her disapproval of Hepworth's conduct on his last call. She was even unconscious that she had arrayed herself with unusual care, in a frock of the color he liked best. And she was a bit taken aback when Hepworth advanced, absently giving her a friendly nod and smile, and taking a little brown paw in

his hand, inquired cordially: "And how is his majesty this afternoon?"

Then he stepped back, and an expression of dismay crossed his countenance. "By Jove, Cecelia, I believe I have forgotten to stop for your violets. Really, I can't imagine how it happened, but I'll have them sent directly."

"Oh, don't trouble," she said coldly, but her tone passed unnoticed.

"I'll tell you what I *have* brought," he continued, with sudden enthusiasm. "I've a package of the finest puppy biscuit you ever saw. Dogs are just mad about them. Johnson told me about it. You know, he is quite a dog fancier, and he told me a lot of things about them that I didn't know before. He says these biscuits are the best thing in the world for small dogs."

He was eagerly opening the parcel, and, breaking off a bit of the biscuit, placed it before Heracles, who received it with evident delight. Hepworth regarded him with deep satisfaction. Then, turning to Cecelia, he observed again: "I'm sorry I forgot your violets, Cecelia; I can't think how it happened."

For a time they discussed the best fare and mode of feeding a dog of Heracles' high breeding. Hepworth had learned many things from his friend, the dog fancier, and found that Cecelia's management was entirely wrong.

"I'll tell you what," he suggested; "we might take his majesty out for a walk right now; it's rather cool, but the air is fine and bracing."

"I'm not really dressed for walking," she answered stiffly.

"That's so, but would it take long——"

"It would."

There was a minute of silence, then Cecelia suggested frigidly: "You and Heracles might take a walk by yourselves, of course; don't let me keep you in."

Hepworth hesitated. "We'd hate to leave you behind, but I really think it would do the little fellow lots of good. Go get your blanket on, old fellow."

"I'm not sure," interposed Cecelia,

"that he would follow you alone. He never has, you know, and——"

"Oh, yes he would," interrupted Hepworth. "You don't know what friends we've grown to be."

Hepworth did not enjoy the walk. It is doubtful if even Heracles really enjoyed it. He made the discovery that there was such a thing as discipline, and returned home, sadder, and, oh, very much wiser. He had experienced something quite new. When they reached home, Cecelia was entertaining callers, and Hepworth waited for but a formal leave-taking.

On the following afternoon he met Cecelia driving. With her was his most dreaded rival, and Heracles was not there. She bowed distantly as they passed, and certain misgivings crept into his heart. Was he to undertake this wretched task, only that another might reap the benefits? His heart was heavy within him as he called shortly after, and gravely presented his card. He had no intention of turning back, once his decision had been made, yet he heartily wished that the duty had not been laid at his door.

He was informed by the maid that Miss Cecelia was suffering from a severe headache, but had suggested that Heracles might entertain him. His alert ear caught the softest rustle from the banister above, and his greeting to Heracles was heartily demonstrative.

His next visit was postponed to the very limits of his patience, and he was told that Cecelia was not at home, but that Heracles would be pleased to see him. Heracles was delighted. Once more they started together for the walk that had now grown familiar to them both. Hepworth was becoming weary of the proceedings, but he was a brave man, and he knew that his cause was good.

Still, that evening he sat in his room, ill at ease. He was discontented with himself, and vexed with Cecelia. As for Heracles, he hardly dared think of him. A hundred misgivings crowded in upon him. What if he had really lost her through this fool trick? He asked himself if he could not have done

much better in a straightforward, manly way. Cecelia was reasonable on every other subject; perhaps he was making a fatal mistake, after all.

He was in a state of uncertainty, when a tiny note was brought to him. That convinced him, at once, that he was wrong, utterly wrong; that he had behaved like a brute, and that he deserved the most disastrous consequences. The note said that Cecelia was starting that morning for a visit of several weeks to an aunt in a distant part of the country. She was taking Heracles with her, and regretted that her hurried departure would afford him no opportunity for a farewell to his little friend. Hepworth gazed absently out of the window, and softly swore.

During the week that followed, Hepworth was a man to be avoided. He formed a countless number of impracticable plans, and discarded them all. The waste-paper basket was piled high with notes written and torn to fragments. Twice he had reached the ticket office, only to turn back at the last instant.

Early in the following week he received a telegram, signed Cecelia, which read:

Come at once. Heracles seriously ill.

His heart gave a great bound. "If the brute will only die," he prayed in his heart, "if he'll only die! It will have to be he or I; we can't both live."

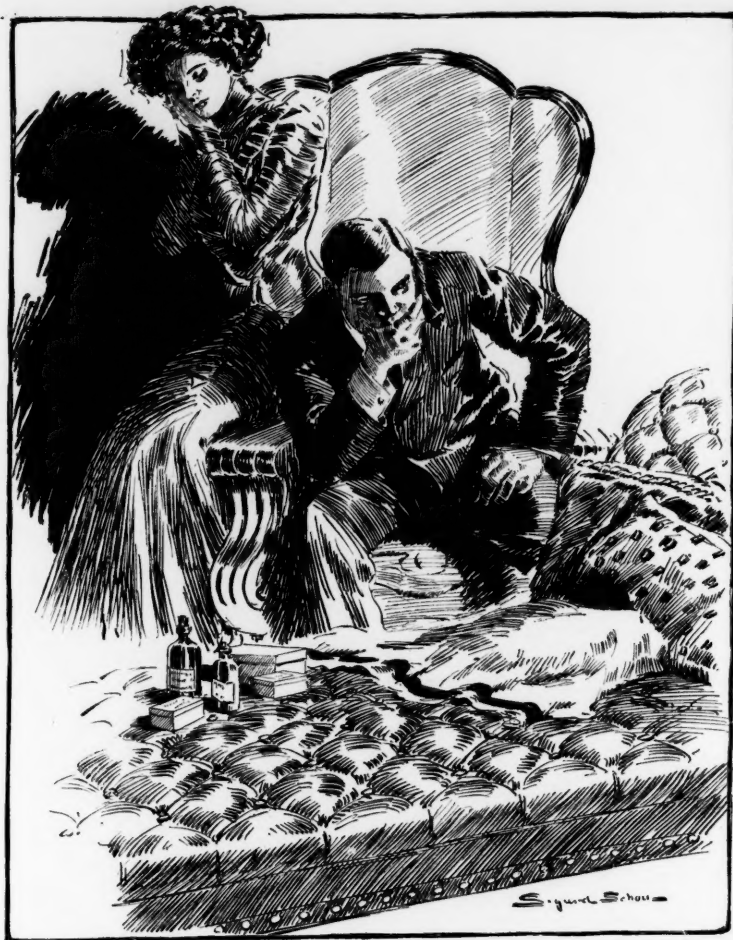
He had hoped that Cecelia would meet him at the station, but he was



Hepworth did not enjoy the walk.

disappointed. The maid that opened the door, gravely conducted him to a small room on the second floor. At the sight which met his eyes, he barely restrained a peal of brutal laughter. The curtains of the room were drawn, and in the dim light he discerned the small, fat figure of his little friend. Soft blankets had been tenderly laid over him, only his frowsy little head, and one limp, brown paw protruding. The mantel was filled with bottles and the usual paraphernalia of the sick room. Beside the couch sat Cecelia. She rose silently, and drew him aside into the hall.

"He is sleeping," she whispered gravely, and added, with a little embarrassment: "I hope I did right in sending for you; it may have seemed extraordinary, but you were so fond of him, and know so much about the care of dogs, I thought—that is——"



The two sat silently watching the sleeping figure on the couch.

"You did quite right," he answered gravely. "I started at once." There was a certain constraint between them, and the conversation became awkward and spasmodic.

She led him back to the sick room, and the two sat silently watching the sleeping figure on the couch. Hepworth's heart fairly warmed toward the little victim. He was a pathetic little

scrap, after all, and he really looked fatally sick.

At short intervals the doctor called. The doctor was the one person who failed to conform the farce. He looked in a bewildered manner at Cecelia, at the luxury surrounding the patient, and at the wretched little bunch of hair that called forth all this attention. He examined the little animal carefully, and

each time declared with brutal finality: "There is nothing more to be done." On one occasion he boldly suggested chloroform, but Hepworth would not hear of it. There would then be nothing for him to do but return ignominiously to the city. He had begun to enjoy these quiet hours by the death-bed of Heracles, where the conversation was carried on in subdued tones, or where they sat in anxious silence. They seemed to Hepworth very cozy and pleasant, and, as the dog was not suffering, he preferred a lingering death.

He knew that Cecelia's aunt had not fully made up her opinion as to whether he was a fool or a hypocrite, but Cecelia's aunt, while he duly appreciated her as a worthy lady, did not enter vitally into his calculations. Occasionally the scene appealed to him as so irresistibly ridiculous that he was obliged to bow his head, and bite his lips. And on these occasions, Cecelia, in her pretty dark dress and white apron, would look across at him with unspoken sympathy in her big, dark eyes.

"This is the worst of having pets," she sighed. "It is so hard when one comes to lose them. I think I shall never have another pet."

"You are right, Cecelia," he agreed solemnly. "Heracles has taught us both a lesson."

But that evening, when he came from his lodgings to the house, Cecelia was waiting for him in the drawing-room, and he knew that the worst had come. When she told him, he stood for a minute with bowed head, struggling for composure. She came and put a timid little hand on his shoulder.

"Did you really care so much for him, Ned?" she asked tremulously.

For a moment, he could not find voice to speak, but he drew her close up to him, and she suddenly buried her flushed face on his shoulder.

"Ned, I've got to tell you," she cried. "I don't know what you'll think, but I must tell you!"

"What is it?" he asked softly.

"I—I'm glad he's dead," she sobbed. "I hated him, and I'm glad he's dead."

He bent his head closer to hers. "So am I," he whispered.



April Fool

MASTERS all, good morrow to you,
And the greetings of the day!
'Tis the Festival of Folly;

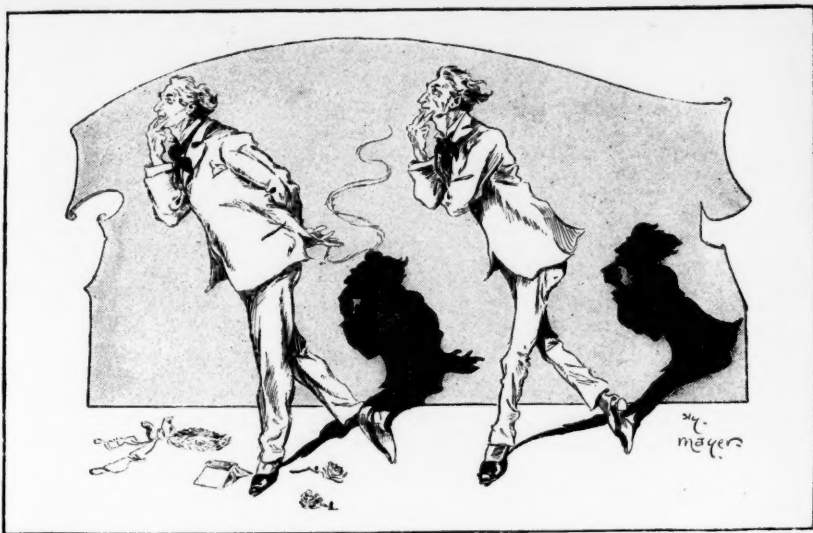
Harlequin comes out to play,

Spreads abroad his glad contagion,
Music of his cap and bells,
Making fools of everybody,
Dupe of everybody else.

Welcome to you, Fool of April.
Prince of merriment and mirth!
Life's a tragedy without you;
There are churls enough on earth.

And we want more jesters like you,
Just to make this life worth while;
Just to overwhelm with laughter
Fools who are too wise to smile.

WILLIAM F. McCORMACK.



Idle Thoughts of an Idle Understudy

A THEATRICAL REVERIE

By Wallace Irwin

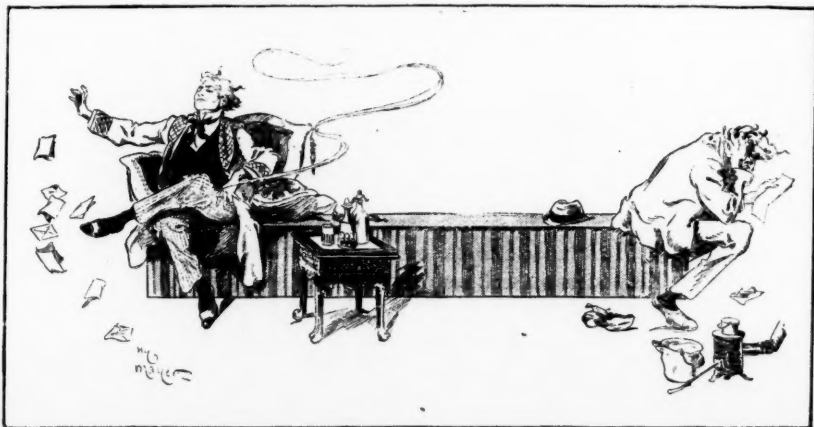
FOR twenty-seven years I've lived for Art
 And now I'm understudy to the star;
 I wear mu hair like him, I've learned his part.
 (I'd like to emulate his motor-car.)
 If I could take his place I think that I
 Would hoist the old profession up a peg;
 There'd be another planet in the sky—
 If only he would slip and break his leg!

I look for signs of illness, but I find
 He's most stupendous careful of his health.
 He looks so well and strong I've half a mind
 To fill his beer with knock-out drops by stealth.
 At centre-stage six evenings in the week
 He thrills the mob. Bouquets? He takes his choice,
 Through speaking lines that I could also speak—
 If only he would dislocate his voice!

The star's so overrated it's a shame,
 And how he gets his pull I can't quite see.
 When Mr. Savage hears *me* do the same
 I guess he'll draw a contract up with me.
 At first I'd start in modest, then I'd grow
 To Shakespeare parts—try *Hamlet* for a trip;
 I've got the talent, all I need's a show—
 Say, if the star would only get the grippe!

When I'm made up for him you wouldn't know
 Us two apart—we're doubles limb for limb.
 If any night to Rector's I should go,
 Wouldn't they rubber, thinking I was him!
 The critics would applaud me to the stars,
 The bill-boards would proclaim "Another Hit!"
 My picture would be pasted on cigars—
 If only he would fall down in a fit!

The postman brings him notes of azure tints;
 He says: "Poor child!" and wafts their costly scent.
 (The postman came to *me* this morn with hints
 Of certain chronic deficits in rent.)
 The star goes by propelled by gasoline
 While I, unbid by Fortune's fickle beck,
 Am still supported by the thought serene:
 "Some day he may fall out and break his neck!"





Concerning Fifteen Fat Steers

By Horace Annesley Vachell

Author of "Her Son," "The Paladin," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

UNCLE JAP" (our head vaquero) "says," murmured my brother Ajax, "that Laban Swiggart has been 'milking' us ever since we bought this ranch."

Laban was our neighbor. A barbed-wire fence divided his sterile hills from our fertile valleys and emphasized sharply the difference between a government claim and a Spanish grant. The county assessor valued the Swiggart ranch at the rate of *one*, and our domain at *six* dollars per acre. We owned two leagues of land; our neighbors but half a section. Yet, in consequence of dry seasons and low prices, we were hardly able to pay our bills, whereas the Swiggarts confounded all laws of cause and effect by living in comparative splendor and luxury.

"Uncle Jap believes that he stole our steers," continued Ajax, puffing slowly at his pipe.

Some two years before, we had lost fifteen fat steers. We had employed Laban to look for them; and he had charged us thirty dollars for labors that were in vain.

"Ajax," said I, "we have eaten the

Swiggarts' salt, not to mention their fattened chicks, their pickled peaches, their jams and jellies. It's an outrage to insinuate, as you do, that these kind neighbors are common thieves."

My brother looked quite distressed. "Of course, Mrs. Swiggart can know nothing about it. She is a real good sort; the best wife and mother in the county. And I'm only quoting Uncle Jap. He says that fifteen steers at thirty dollars a head make four hundred and fifty dollars. Laban built a barn that spring, and put up a tank and windmill."

With this Parthian shot my brother left me to some sorry reflections. I cordially liked and respected Laban Swiggart and his family. He had married a Skenk. No name in our county smelled sweeter than Skenk; a synonym, indeed, for piety, deportment, shell work, and the preserving of fruits. The Widow Skenk lived in San Lorenzo, hard by the Congregational church; and it was generally conceded that the hand of one of her daughters in marriage was a certificate of character to the groom. No Skenk had

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been known to wed a drunkard, a blasphemer, or an evil liver. Moreover, Laban had been the first to welcome us—two raw Englishmen—to a country where inexperience is a sin. He had helped us over many a stile; he had saved us many dollars. And he had an honest face. Broad, benignant brows surmounted a pair of keen and kindly eyes; his nose proclaimed a sense of humor; his mouth and chin were concealed by a beard almost apostolic in its silky beauty. Could such a man be a thief?

The very next day Laban rode down his steep slopes and asked us to help him and his to eat a Christmas turkey. He said something, too, about a fine ham, and a "proposition," a money-making scheme, to be submitted to us after the banquet.

"Hard times are making you rich," said Ajax.

"My God!" he exclaimed passionately. "Have I not been poor long enough? Have I not seen my wife and children suffering for want of proper food and clothing? If prosperity is coming my way, boys, I've paid the price for it, and don't you forget it."

His eyes were suffused with tears, and Ajax took note of it. My brother told me later that so tender a husband and father could be no cattle thief.

Upon Christmas Day we sat at meat for nearly two hours. Mrs. Doctor Tapper, the wife of the stout dentist of San Miguelito, was present. Of the three Misses Skenk, she had made the best match—from a worldly point of view. She wore diamonds; she kept two hired girls; she entertained on a handsome scale, and never failed to invite her less fortunate sisters to her large and select parties; she was, in a word, a most superior person, and a devout church member. To this lady Ajax made himself mightily agreeable.

"Now, really," said she, "I do wish the doctor was here. He does so dearly love badinage. That, and bridge work, is his forte."

"And why isn't he here?" demanded my brother.

"He's hunting our bay mare. She broke out of the barn this morning. I told him that I wouldn't disappoint Alviry for an ark full of bay mares. I knew she would count on me to help her entertain you gentlemen."

"I hope your husband will find his mare," said Ajax. "We lost fifteen fat steers once, but we never found them."

"That's so," observed Mr. Swiggart. "And I wore myself out a-hunting 'em. They was stolen—sure."

"The wickedness of some folk passes my understanding," remarked Mrs. Tapper. "Well, we're told that the triumphing of the wicked is short, but—good land!—Job never lived in this state."

"He'd been more to home in New England," said Laban slyly. The Skenks were from Massachusetts, the Swiggarts from Illinois.

"There's a pit digged for such," continued Mrs. Tapper, ignoring the interruption, "a pit full o' brimstone and fire. Yes, sister, I will take one more slice of the ham. I never ate sweeter meat. Eastern, I presume, my dear?"

"No, sister. Laban cured that ham. Porkpacking was his trade back East."

Laban added: "Boys, I hope ye like that ham. I've a reason for asking."

We assured our host that the ham was superlatively good. Mince and pumpkin pies followed; coffee, then grace. As we rose from the table, Laban said pleasantly: "Boys, here are some imported cigars. We'll smoke outside."

Having, so to speak, soaped the ways, Mr. Swiggart launched his "proposition." He wished to pack bacon. Hogs, he pointed out, were selling at two cents a pound; bacon and hams at twelve and fifteen cents. We had some two hundred and fifty hogs ready for market. These Laban wanted to buy on credit. He proposed to turn them into lard, hams, and bacon, to sell the same to local merchants—thereby saving cost of transportation—and to divide the profits with us after the original price of the hogs was paid. This seemed a one-sided bargain. He was to do all the work; we should, in

any case, get the market price for the hogs, while the profits were to be divided. However, our host explained that we took all the risk. If the bacon spoiled he would not agree to pay us a cent. With the taste of that famous ham in our mouths, this contingency seemed sufficiently remote; and we said as much.

"Well, I could rob ye right and left. Ye've got to trust me, and there's a saying: 'To trust is to bust.'"

He was so candid in explaining the many ways by which an unscrupulous man might take advantage of two ignorant Britons that Ajax, not relishing the personal flavor of the talk, rose and strolled across to the branding corral. When he returned he was unusually silent; and, riding home, he said thoughtfully: "I saw Laban's brand this afternoon. It is 81, and the 8 is the same size as our S. His earmark is a crop, which obliterates our swallow fork. Queer—eh?"

"Not at all," I replied indignantly. "It's a social crime, to eat as you did to-day, three large helpings of turkey, and then——"

"Bosh!" he interrupted. "If Laban is an honest man, no harm has been done. If he stole our steers—and, mind you, I don't say he did—three slices off the breast of a turkey will hardly offset my interest in five tons of beef. As for this packing scheme, it sounds promising; but we lack figures. Tomorrow we will drive into San Lorenzo, and talk to the Children of Israel.

9

If Ikey Rosenbaum says that bacon is likely to rise or stay where it is, we will accept Laban's proposition."

The following morning, we started early. The short cut to San Lorenzo lay through the Swiggart claim, and the road passed within a few yards of the house. We saw Mrs. Swiggart on the veranda, and offered to execute any commissions that she cared to intrust to two bachelors. In reply, she said that she hated to ask favors, but

—if we were going to town in a two-seater, would we be so very kind as to bring back her mother, Mrs. Skenk, who was ailing, and in need of a change?

"Gran'ma's hard on the springs," observed Euphemia, Mrs. Swiggart's youngest girl, "but she'll tell you more stories than you can shake a stick at; not 'bout fairies, Mr. Ajax, but reel folks."

We assured Mrs. Swiggart that we should esteem it a pleasure to give her

mother a lift. Ajax had met the old lady at a church social some six months before, and, finding her a bonanza of gossip, had extracted some rich and curious ore.

In San Lorenzo we duly found Isaac Rosenbaum, who proved an optimist on the subject of bacon. Indeed, he chattered so glibly of rising prices and better times that the packing scheme was immediately referred to his mature judgment; and he not only commended it heartily, but offered to handle our "stuff" on commission, or to buy it outright if it proved marketable. Accord-



"If prosperity is coming my way, boys, I've paid the price for it, and don't you forget it."



"For God's sake, sit down!" he screamed.

ing to Ikey, the conjunction "if" could not be ignored. Packing bacon beneath the sunny skies of southern California was a speculation, he said. Swiggart, he added, ought to know what good hams were, for he bought the very best Eastern brand.

"What!" we cried simultaneously. "Does Mr. Swiggart *buy* hams?"

Yes; it seemed that only a few days previously Laban had carefully selected the choicest ham in the store.

Ajax clutched my arm, and we fled.

"We have convicted the wretch," he said presently.

"The *wretches*," I amended.

The use of the plural smote him in the face. "This is awful," he groaned. "Why, when you were away last summer, and I broke my leg, she nursed me like a mother."

"Women throw such sops to a barking conscience."

I was positive now that Laban had stolen the steers, and that his wife was privy to the theft. The lie about the ham had been doubtless concocted for purposes of plunder. The kindness of our neighbors had been, after all, but a snare for tender feet.

We found Mrs. Skenk—whom we had seen on arrival—sitting on her front porch, satchel in hand, patiently awaiting us. Ajax helped her to mount—no light task, for she was a very heavy and enfeebled woman. I drove. As we trotted down the long, straggling street, our passenger spoke with feeling of the changes that had taken place in the old mission town.

"I've lived here thirty years. Twenty mighty hard ones as a married woman; and ten to'able easy ones as a widder. Mr. Skenk was a saintly man, but tryin' to live with, on account o' deafness and the azmy. I never see a chicken took with the gapes but I think o' Abram Skenk. Yes, Mr. Ajax, my daughters was all born here, 'ceptin' Alviry. She was born in Massachusetts. It did make a difference to the child. As a little girl, she kep' herself to herself. And, though I'd rather cut out my tongue than say a single word against Laban Swiggart, I do feel that he'd no business to pick the best in the basket. Favorite? No, sir; but I've said, many a time, that if Alviry went to her long home, I could not tarry here. Most women feel that way about the firstborn. I've told Alviry to her face as she'd ought to have said 'No' to Laban Swiggart. Oh, the suffering that dear child has endured! It did seem till lately as if horse tradin', cattle raisin', and the butcher business was industries against which the Lord had set His face. Sairy married an undertaker; Samantha *couldn't* refuse Doctor Tapper. And, rain or shine, folks must have teeth if they want to eat the steaks they sell in Californy, and likewise they must have caskets when their time comes. Yes, Alviry does take after me, Mr. Ajax. You're reel clever to say so. She ain't a talker, but brainy. You've seen her wax flowers? Yes; and the shell table with 'Bless our Home' on it, in pink cowries? Mercy sakes! There's a big storm a-comin' up."

The rain began to fall as she spoke; at first lightly, then more heavily as we began to cross the mountains. Long before we came to the Salinas

River, it was pouring down in torrents, an inch of water to the hour.

"It's a cloudburst," said Mrs. Skenk, from beneath a prehistoric umbrella. "This'll flush the creeks good."

I whipped up the horses, thinking of the Salinas and its treacherous waters. In California, when the ground is well sodden, a very small storm will create a very big freshet. At such times most rivers are dangerous to ford on account of quicksands.

"I guess we'll make it," observed the old lady. "I've crossed when it was b'ilin' from bank to bank. I mind me when Jim Tarburt was drowned—no 'count, Jim. He'd no more sense than a yaller dog. 'Twas a big streak o' luck for his wife and babies, for Suannah Tarburt married old man Hopping, and when he died the very next year she was left—rich. Then there was that pore, thin schoolmarm, Ireen Bunker. She——"

And Mrs. Skenk continued with a catalogue, long as that of the ships in the "Iliad," of travelers, who, in fording the Salinas, had crossed that other grim river, which flows forever between time and eternity. We had reached the banks before she had drained her memory of those who had perished.

"'Tis b'ilin'," she muttered, as she peered up and down the yellow, foam-speckled torrent that roared defiance at us. "But, good land, we can't go around now. Keep the horses' noses upstream, young man, and use your whip."

We plunged in.

What followed took place quickly. In midstream the near horse floundered into a quicksand, and fell, swinging round the pole, and with it the off horse. I lashed the poor, struggling beasts unmercifully, but the wagon settled slowly down—inch by inch. Death grinned us in the teeth.

Then I heard Mrs. Skenk say, quite collectedly: "'Tis my fault, and my weight."

Then Ajax roared out: "For God's sake, sit down, ma'am, sit down! Sit

down!" he screamed, his voice shrill above the bellowing, booming waters.

A crash behind told me that he had flung her back into her seat. At the same moment the near horse found a footing; there was a mighty pull from both the terrified animals, the harness held, and the danger was over. When we reached the bank, I looked round. Mrs. Skenk was smiling; Ajax was white as chalk.

"She w-w-would have s-s-sacrificed her l-l-life," he stammered. "If I hadn't grabbed her, she would be dead this minute."

"I reckon that's so," assented our passenger. "I took a notion to jump. My weight and fool advice was like to cost three lives. Better one, thinks I, than three. You saved my life, Mr. Ajax. Yes, you did. Alviry, I reckon, will thank you."

The rest of the journey was accomplished in silence. We drove up to the Swiggarts' house, and both Laban and his wife expressed great surprise at seeing us.

"You're wet through, mother," said Mrs. Swiggart, "and all of a tremble."

"Yes, Alviry, I've had a close call. This young man saved my life."

"Nonsense!" said Ajax gruffly. "I did nothing of the sort, Mrs. Skenk."

"Yes, you did," she insisted, grimly obstinate.

"Anyways," said Mrs. Swiggart, "you'll lose what has been saved, mother, if you stand there in the rain."

As we drove off, my brother said to me: "Did you mark Mrs. Swiggart's face? It was ghastly."

For five days it rained steadily. Our creek, which for eleven months in the year bleated sweetly at the foot of the garden, bellowed loudly as any bull of Bashan, and kept us prisoners in the house, where we had leisure to talk and reflect. We had been robbed and humbugged, injured in pride and pocket, but the lagging hours anointed our wounds. Philosophy touched us with healing finger.

"If we prosecute we advertise our own greenness," said Ajax. "After all,

if Laban did fleece us, he kept at bay other ravening wolves. And there is Mrs. Skenk. That plucky old soul must never hear the story. It would kill her."

So we decided to charge profit and loss with five hundred dollars, and to keep our eyes peeled for the future. By this time the skies had cleared, and the cataract was a creek again. The next day Mrs. Swiggart drove up to the barn, tied her horse to the hitching post, and walked with impressive dignity up the garden path. We had time to note that something was amiss. Her dark eyes, beneath darker brows, intensified a curious pallor—that sickly hue which is seen upon the faces of those who have suffered grievously in mind or body. Ajax opened the door and offered her a chair, but not his hand. She did not seem to notice the discourtesy. We asked if her mother had suffered from the effects of a wetting.

"Mother has been very sick," she replied, in a lifeless voice. "She's been at death's door. For five days I've prayed to Almighty God, and I swore that if He'd see fit to spare mother, I'd come down here, and on my bended knees"—she sank on the floor—"ask for your forgiveness as well as His. Don't come near me," she entreated; "let me say what must be said in my own way. When I married Laban Swiggart, I was an honest woman, though full o' pride and conceit. And he was an honest man. To-day we're thieves and liars."

"Mrs. Swiggart," said Ajax, springing forward and raising her to her feet, "you must not kneel to us. There—sit down and say no more. We know all about it, and it's blotted out, so far as we're concerned."

Her sobs—the vehement, heartbreaking sobs of a man rather than of a woman—gradually ceased. She continued in a softer voice:

"It began way back, when I was a little girl. Mother set me on a pedestal; p'raps I'd ought to say I set myself there. It's like me to be blaming mother. Anyways, I just thought my-

self a little mite cleverer and handsomer and better than the rest o' the family. I aimed to beat Sarah and Samantha at whatever they undertook, and Satan let me do it. I reckon I must ha' made him smile more'n once. There may be joy in heaven over some sinners, but there's joy somewhere else over them as thinks themselves saints.

ful good. He laughed and worked, but we couldn't make it. Times was too hard. I'd see Samantha trailin' silks and satins in the dust, and—and my underskirts was made o' flour sacks. Yes—flour sacks! And me a Skenk!"

She paused. Neither Ajax nor I spoke. Comedy lies lightly upon all things, like foam upon the dark waters.



"After that we robbed you when and where we could."

Well, I did one good thing. I married a poor man because I loved him. Laban wa'n't well fixed, but I didn't care. I said to myself: 'He has brains, and so have I. The dollars will come.' But they didn't come. The children came.

"Then Sarah and Samantha married. They married men o' means, and the gall and wormwood entered into my soul, and ate it away. Laban was aw-

Beneath are tragedy and the tears of time.

"Then you gentlemen came and bought land. They said you was lords, with money to burn. I told Laban to help you in the buyin' o' horses, and cattle, and barb wire, and groceries. He got big commissions, but he kept off the other bloodsuckers. We paid some of our debts, and Laban bought me a black

silk gown. I couldn't rest till Samantha had felt of it. She'd none better. If we'd only been satisfied with that!

"Well, that black silk made everything else look dreadful mean. 'Twas then you spoke to Laban about choosin' a brand. Satan put it into my head to say—S. It scart Laban. He was butcherin' then, and he surmised what I was after; I persuaded him that 'twas for the children's sake. The first steer paid for Emanuel's baby clothes and cradle. They was finer than what Sarah bought for her child. Then we killed the others—one by one. Laban let 'em through the fence, and then clapped our brand a-top o' yours. They paid for the tank and windmill. After that we robbed you when and where we could. We put up that bacon scheme, meanin' to ship the stuff to the city and to tell you that it had spoiled on us. We robbed none else, only you. And we actually justified ourselves. We surmised 'twas fittin' that Britishers should pay for the support o' good Americans."

"I've read some of your histories," said Ajax dryly, "and can understand that point of view."

"Satan fools them as fool themselves, Mr. Ajax. But the truth struck me and Laban when we watched by mother. She was not scared o' death. And she praised me to Laban, and said that I'd chosen the better part in marryin' a poor man for love; and that money hadn't made Christian women of Sarah and Samantha. She blamed herself, dear soul, for settin' store overly much on dollars and cents. And she said she could die easier, thinking that

what was good in her had passed to me, and not what was evil. And, Mr. Ajax, that talk just drove me and Laban crazy. Well, mother ain't going to die, and we ain't, neither—till we've paid back the last cent we stole from you. Laban has figgered it out, principal and interest, and he's drawn a note for fifteen hundred dollars, which we've both signed. Here it is."

She tendered us a paper. Ajax stuck his hands into his pockets, and I did the same.

She misinterpreted the action. "You ain't going to prosecute?" she faltered.

Ajax nodded to me. Upon formal occasions, he expects me, being the elder, to speak. If I say more or less than he approves I am severely taken to task.

"Mrs. Swiggart," I began, lamely enough, "I am sure that your husband can cure hams——"

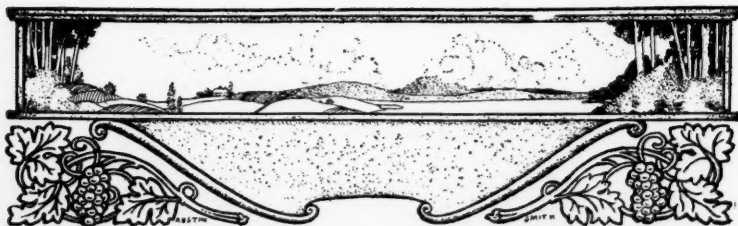
Ajax looked at me indignantly. With the best of motives, I had given a sore heart a grievous twist.

"We bought that ham," she said sadly, "a-purpose."

"No matter. We have decided to go into this packing business with your husband. There is money in it for us, and for you. Tell Mr. Swiggart to ride down and talk matters over. When—er—experience goes into partnership with ignorance, ignorance expects to pay a premium. We have paid our premium."

She rose, and we held out our hands.

"No, gentleman; I won't take your hands till that debt is canceled. The piano and the team will go some ways toward it. Good-by, and—thank you."





Arabella's Chance

By Lola Ridge

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

THERE was quite a representative gathering at Madam Delanie's studio, to meet Adrien Greene, poet and guest of the evening. He was a small, narrow, anæmic-looking young man, suffering, apparently, from a weak spine; for he leaned against every object that presented a solid surface. Just now the latter happened to be an easel supporting Madam Delanie's last canvas—the portrait of a stout young woman, with blue, bulging eyes, and no suggestion of bone under the smooth expanse of face.

The studio was a long, uncarpeted room, the walls of which were covered with a strange assortment of objects—bric-à-brac, sketches, plaster casts, each

with a minimum of space; in fact, the curios crowded each other nearly as uncomfortably as the guests. Here and there some article of more than ordinary importance occupied a greater margin of room. In one place, quite two feet of wall paper was taken up by a piece of circular wood, coated with gold paint, and bearing the legend attached: "Crest of the Mikado. Stolen from a temple in Japan." A charcoal copy of Raphael's Sistine Madonna, with the halo tilted slightly over the left ear, hung opposite the door.

"Madam"—a large mass of woman attired in a close-fitting gown of black sequin-spangled silk—was talking to her friend, Mrs. Van Blockem, a stout

lady, with a well-massaged face and marcelled white hair.

"Yes," the former was saying, "Arabella paints quite nicely; in fact, she sold a water color once. I really don't see why I can't make a match between her and Adrien Greene—for some reason he's very anxious to meet her."

"Perhaps it's that portrait you painted; it certainly flatters Arabella."

Madam glanced complacently at the easel, where the light was shining through the painted canvas with grotesque effect.

"Of course, it's a *lit-tle* flattering; poor Arabella never had skin like *that*. Seriously, though, I think it would be a good thing for both of them. Arabella has six hundred a year—just Adrien's allowance from his mother. With that and his poetry, they ought to get along quite nicely."

"Isn't he rather young for her?"

"Adrien is a poet; all poets need a guardian. Besides, Arabella can't be much over thirty, and she has perfectly good teeth. If only that little Hetty Levenge doesn't interfere! Ah, Arabella!" Madam condensed her spacious person to make room for a short young woman, with a prominent nose and very blue eyes. "I was just saying to Mrs. Van Blockem that you and Mr. Greene will be sure to like each other."

"I'm just crazy to meet him," Arabella said, in a thin, high-pitched voice, that contrasted oddly with her plump person. "Ever since I read 'The Haunted Pool and Other Verses,' I've done nothing but quote them to my friends. They all laugh at me so; they say it's nothing but Adrien Greene, Adrien Greene, all day long."

If her words reached the poet, he did not betray the fact. His large, pale gray eyes were fixed with an expression of absorbed interest on the Sistine Madonna.

Madam Delanie ambled over to him. "Adrien, I want you to meet Miss Arabella Tarbel—my young artist, you know."

The poet passed his hand over his sparse, but lengthy, locks. "I shall be

delighted to meet Miss Tarbel," he said suavely.

By this time, Arabella was so interested talking art to her neighbor, little Hetty Levenge, that she did not hear till Madam had spoken twice, and tapped her cheek with a fan. Then she looked up, apologizing prettily.

"Mr. Greene, the poet, I know, Miss Tarbel, that you two clever people are going to find a lot in common."

Adrien dropped into a seat on Arabella's right. "Glad to meet you, Miss Tarbel. I've often admired that little rose study of yours at the Metropolitan."

Arabella's plump cheeks flushed and her eyes drooped. The poet regarded her approvingly; here was truly a fine sensibility. But—what was that little, black-eyed girl snickering at?

"Mrs. Van Blockem has *very* kindly consented to give her beautiful recitation, 'The Song of the Sword,'" Madam announced.

There was an appropriate murmur of satisfaction, as the marcelled lady stepped forward. The poet sighed, and leaned back in his chair. This would be the thirteenth time that he had listened to Mrs. Van Blockem recite "The Song of the Sword."

Little Hetty Levenge plucked his sleeve. "She'll soon be through," she whispered encouragingly. "Just look at the madonna, and try and get her halo on straight—that's what I do."

The poet smiled wanly, but did not turn his head; he had not been introduced to Hetty. Moreover, his thoughts were busy with a new poem, of which Miss Tarbel was the subject.

Oh, to lean for one lingering moment

With her lips to my lips!

Dumpty-dum-dum-dumpty-dum-dum—

In the pale moon's eclipse.

What rhymed with moment? Besomoment—doment—glowment—growment—no—they wouldn't do. Grow—woe—embow—embowment! Unconsciously, he murmured it aloud.

Hetty caught the word imperfectly. "Embonpoint? You should have seen her a month ago; she's been taking Parson's reducing pills since then."

The poet shivered, and turned away. "Under the wide sky's embowment —" Aha, that was a good line! But—"lips to her lips"—wasn't that too—er—warm? The public was very shy; at least, the editors had told him so. "With her hand in my hand"—"on a sloping headland?" No, it was not so good as the other, but at least he would get a cent a word for it—"Oh, to lean for one ling——"

The recitation ceased in a flutter of applause, as the marcelled lady sailed to a seat. The poet turned to Miss Tarbel.

"Well," he said, "how did you enjoy it?"

Arabella sighed ecstatically. "Ah—it was perfect! She is so full of soul, and the poem——"

Adrien looked at her, with pale, meditative eyes. "Mrs. Van Blockem's soul may—probably does, exist—I have never probed for it; the poem—I have never listened to it." Arabella groped for words, but none were forthcoming. Finally, she tittered. "Yes," he proceeded, noting that she had very pretty teeth, "while Mrs. Van Blockem was imitating, I was creating."

Arabella sat up animatedly. "How perfectly lovely, Mr. Greene! Do tell me about it?"

"It is addressed to a woman, Miss Tarbel—a woman with blue, blue eyes! By the way, in regard to that study of yours at the Metropolitan, 'The Shrine,' how did you——"

"Professor Tuttingham, the famous Shakespeareologist," interrupted the wheezy voice of Madam.

A bald man, with an abnormal dome of forehead and a trimmed Vandyke beard, bowed profoundly. He carried a roll of manuscript that somehow seemed as much a physical part of him as his hair and beard.

"The professor, on his last visit to England," proceeded Madam, "made a most wonderful find—seventy pages of closely written manuscript relating to an early love affair of Shakespeare's with Ann Hathaway's maiden aunt. The professor will now read us an unabridged copy of this, and I'm sure

you will all agree with me that we cannot sufficiently *thank* Professor Tuttingham for this *great* intellectual treat."

The bald man beamed upon the company. "The contents of this manuscript," he began, "the contents of this man——"

There was a sudden crash behind the professor, and, slipping sideways in his chair, his face pale, his eyes closed, and his head upon Miss Tarbel's shoulder, lay the poet. In a moment, he was surrounded, while Madam held a glass of anæmic-looking claret to his lips. Little Hetty Levenge made a valiant attempt to lift his limp head from its resting place, but Arabella, twisting her plump fingers in his coat collar, held it down resolutely, the cold glitter of possession in her eye.

"Give him air!" she cried indignantly. "Get away, and give him air!"

"Carry him to the lounge," rasped a dominant voice, and the little crowd scattered, as a tall, bony young woman walked through, or, rather, over them. "Lay him flat down—head low—that's right," as the professor gingerly lifted the poet's heels. "Give me his head. Now—take off his collar, and fetch me some water—good and cold."

The poet stirred feebly. "Where am I?" he gasped. Every one volunteered the information together, and Adrien looked from one to the other pathetically. "Awful fool stunt. Guess I've been working too hard lately—not enough sleep, and that sort of thing." He laughed weakly. "Sorry to miss your interesting talk, professor, but I must get out and have a walk in the open air."

"I'm so sorry, dear madam," cooed Arabella, "but I must be going, too. I've been sitting up so late every night this week—working at that pastel, you know." She reached for her wraps, and Adrien sprang to help her.

The bony young woman fixed him with an accusing eye. "You recovered quickly," she said, and her voice was like the tinkle of the ice that the maid was dropping in the glasses behind the screen.



She opened the door another inch. It did not occur to her that she might have opened it all the way.

Hetty was struggling into her coat, but Madam laid a detaining hand upon her shoulder.

"Just a moment, my child. I have something to say to you." And she turned to say good night to Miss Tarbel and the poet, who were going out together.

Arabella flicked an imaginary speck of dust from the poet's shoulder, and looked back, to smile sweetly at Hetty. "Good night, dearie," she fluted. "I'll see you to-morrow."

Hetty gazed after them disgustedly. "There she goes," she muttered, "the biggest fake in the Quarter—dragging a man after her!"

Madam caught the tag end of the sentence. "Mr. Greene is a poet," she corrected gently.

It was a bitterly cold night, with a keen wind blowing, and the snow that had fallen earlier in the day had frozen under foot. The poet offered his arm to Miss Tarbel; it did not occur to him to take a car. When they had walked three blocks in silence, Arabella became nervous.

"Wh-what a perfect night for a walk," she ventured, holding her hat in position with one frost-bitten hand.

"Um," acquiesced the poet. He was, in fact, finding a rhyme for Tarbel. "Car-bell" seemed to be the only avail-

able word, and—no—car-bell would *not* do. Suddenly, it occurred to him that his companion had spoken. "What did you say a moment ago?" he asked solicitously.

"I—I only said," gasped Miss Tarbel, the wind running away with her words, "that it was a pe-perfect night for a walk."

"Now," said the poet, "that is what I admire. You make me think of Walt Whitman's poem: 'A woman with the old divine suppleness and strength.'" He glanced sideways at Miss Tarbel's corseted and rather stodgy form. "You may remember the lines?"

"I—oh, yes—they are wonderful!" Arabella had a hazy notion that Walt Whitman was a man who had written improper things about Grass. "But do tell me something about your own work," she added hurriedly.

"I have here a bundle of manuscript poems, that I intend taking to the publishers to-morrow, and here"—he laid a gloved finger upon the site of his heart—"are a few lines that I would like to have the honor of dedicating to you."

"Oh, Mr. Greene—how delightful! Will you give me a copy?"

In an access of recklessness, Arabella took her numbed hand from her hat, whereupon that writhing article instantly left her head and careened along the pavement. At the end of the block, the poet caught up with it, but the thing eluded his grasp and fluttered into, the gutter just as a belated messenger boy on a bicycle was rounding the corner. The rest happened quickly. When the hatless Miss Tarbel arrived on the scene, a crowd had collected around the ruins of a bicycle, and a damaged messenger boy was busy explaining to a policeman how it had *not* happened.

"Mr. Greene!" shrieked Arabella, from the edge of the crowd. "Where are you, Mr. Greene?"

The next moment the pale and mud-bespattered poet limped dejectedly toward her. Half an inch of skin was missing from the tip of his nose; he had a scratch above the right eyebrow,

and an abrasion on the left cheekbone. His chin alone—being considerably behind the other features—had escaped the collision. He held out a battered object, with a yard of dragged chiffon dangling behind.

"I'm afraid it's out of shape," he said, with a sickly smile.

"Oh, Mr. Greene! How brave of you! But you're hurt—I know you're hurt!"

"It is infinitesimal," said the poet hastily. "Now, if you are ready, we will go."

While Miss Tarbel adjusted the ruins of her hat, the policeman glanced at Adrien's coat—it was a good coat.

"Sorry, sir," he said civilly, "but I must take your name and address."

"Adam Bell, Fifty-one Blank Street," lied the poet, his one idea being to set his abiding place as far as possible from its real location.

"Have you a room there?" This time the tone was not so civil.

"Certainly," said the poet haughtily.

The officer flicked a speck of mud from his uniform. "Because Fifty-one Blank Street happens to be a public hall," he remarked casually.

"That's all right," stammered the poet, "I—I'm the janitor."

A fuzzy-headed girl among the bystanders laughed loudly. "Course he is," she shrilled. "Cain't yer see he's orf dooty?"

The agitated poet thrust an expired car transfer into the policeman's hand, under the impression that it was a dollar bill, and, grasping the disheveled Arabella by the hand, hurried through the crowd.

Under a street lamp, Traffic Officer Number Thirty-nine examined the transfer. "I bet that Johnnie's got some little game on," he soliloquized wrathfully. "I only hopes he runs inter me ag'in!"

Miss Tarbel led the way up the next dimly lighted street, halting beside a forbidding-looking building, from the front of which the sign, "Studios to Let" flapped forlornly in the wind.

"This is where I live," she said. "And now, if you would care to come

upstairs and brush your coat—" It was really not much past ten, she reasoned; anyway, it could not be improper to ask a poet upstairs at *any* hour.

"Well," Adrien said, "if you'll permit me to come in and fix up, it will oblige me. Allow me," for Miss Tarbel's frozen fingers were fumbling with the latchkey.

"I never saw anything like these doors," she exclaimed, "the locks are always going wrong. The other night—"

She stopped as a man brushed by them, banging the door loudly after him, and the two groped their way up the creaking, uncarpeted stairs. Five flights up, Arabella unlocked another creaking door, and the poet followed her into a small room, in which a tiny tip of gas jet was burning. As Miss Tarbel turned up the light, Adrien took in the surroundings at a glance. The studio was small and sparsely furnished, the walls being upholstered in deep crimson paper. This was further decorated by various sketches—charcoal drawings, etc. A freshly painted canvas of a cluster of water lilies, tied with a blue ribbon, stood upon the easel.

Arabella fluttered nervously about him with a whisk broom. "Don't you like the color of my walls, Mr. Greene? I think it is so temperamental."

Adrien mumbled something inarticulate. As he was in the studio of a great artist, he would have liked to feast his eyes on some of the work yet to be given to an admiring world. But beyond the abortion on the easel—the offense, no doubt, of some irresponsible student—no paintings were to be seen.

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Greene?" Arabella settled herself comfortably on what appeared to be the only chair, and the poet squatted resentfully upon a camp stool—he hated to have to look up to a woman. "I have been reading your exquisite 'Bath of a Sparrow,' Mr. Greene."

The poet's brow cleared a little and, producing a pencil and notebook, he said:

"I'll jot down these few lines, of

which I spoke. A small appreciation—unhappily unworthy of its object."

After scribbling busily for a few moments, he presented the paper, with a bow:

Arabella read aloud in a hushed voice:

"The blue of the eyes of Miss Tarbel
Dripped out of the sky,
And her voice is the tone of a far bell
Caught wandering by.

"Oh, to lean for one lingering moment
My lips to her lips,
Under the wide sky's embowment,
In the pale moon's eclipse."

"Oh, Mr. Greene!" said Miss Tarbel. "Oh, Mr. Greene!"

The poet waved his hand, with a gesture of depreciation. "A mere trifle! I have here, however, a fragment, that I think you will like."

"Oh, Mr. Greene, would you be so perfectly sweet as to read it to me?"

"With very great pleasure," the poet assured her truthfully. Then, in a voice full of feeling, he began to read:

"ODE TO A MERMAID.

"Oh, scaled, extraordinary thing
That meandereth in the brine—"

Arabella listened, with an ecstatic smile on her lips, and the poet read on through the bulky volume of manuscript. In fact, he read until Miss Tarbel's smile became a frozen thing, and her limbs screamed for relief under the proddings of a thousand needles from the cramped position that she did not dare to change. She sat facing the clock, which stood upon the mantelshelf behind the poet's head, and watched the hands crawl past the midnight hour.

When Adrien had finished the last poem, he looked up expectantly. Arabella came up to expectations. "Mr. Greene, you are a great, great genius." The poet folded his manuscript. "Thank you!" she ended fervently.

The poet looked at the clock. "My dear Miss Tarbel, I ask a thousand pardons. The time has passed so quickly in your charming presence! I had intended to ask you to show me



"Wut yer up fer?" voiced the old man, lurching over the poet's shoulder.

some of your paintings—now, of course, it is too late."

Arabella smiled a twisted smile. "I have so enjoyed your reading, Mr. Greene!"

The poet held out his hand. "Good night, Miss Tarbel, and accept my thanks for this delightful evening."

"Oh, go—good night, Mr. Greene," Arabella said nervously. "And would you mind walking downstairs quietly? You see, my landlady lives on the second floor, and she's a very light sleeper."

"Miss Tarbel, I shall not disturb your landlady." And the poet bowed himself out.

Ten minutes later, the disrobed Arabella heard a timid knock at the door. Petrified, she listened, her blue eyes bulging. In a moment the knock was repeated. Hurriedly tucking a coil of hair that she had just removed under a cushion and scrambling into a kimono, she put her lips to the keyhole.

"Who's there?" she demanded.

A tiny white object was thrust under the door. Palpitating, she picked it up. "Adrien Greene." It was the poet's visiting card! Throwing a lace scarf over her depleted locks, she unfastened the door, opened it a couple of inches, and peeped out. The poet,

pale and agitated, stood before her, his shoes in his hand and his feet clad in lavender silk socks. And who shall say what horrid doubts went through Miss Tarbel's maiden soul? Had she entertained a wolf in a poet's overcoat?

"What is the matter?" she quavered.

"I can't get out!" said the poet.

"You'd better come in, then," Arabella whispered. "*She'll* hear you!" And she opened the door another inch. It did not occur to her that she might have opened it all the way. However, the poet squeezed through. She looked at his feet, with cold inquiry.

"I—I removed them for fear of making a noise," he said miserably.

For the first time since he had seen her, Miss Tarbel's smile seemed to have come off.

"Why cannot you get out?"

"The lock seems to be broken—it won't move—I've tried it every way."

The two looked at each other. "I can't keep you here," said Arabella.

"Your landlady might have some tools," ventured the poet.

"Impossible! She's terribly respectable! And it's two o'clock in the morning!"

"I wish you hadn't asked me to read to you," lamented Adrien.

"I like that!" retorted Arabella, with

unexpected temper. "It's just like a man to blame the woman!"

"My dear Miss Tarbel, I never dreamed of blaming you," exclaimed the poet. "What am I to do?" he asked helplessly.

Arabella crossed to the window, and, throwing open the shutter, looked out into the night. Then she turned to the poet.

"There is a fire escape outside," she suggested tremulously.

The poet rose, a pale gleam of resolution in his eyes. "Miss Tarbel," he said, with desperate calmness, "for your sake I will do it."

She clasped her hands, quivering with apprehension and the icy air. "Oh, please hurry, Mr. Greene! You—you won't make a noise, will you?"

Adrien looked at her with dejection. "I will try not to inconvenience you," he said coldly.

The wind still blew bleakly and the iron was slippery with frost as the poet climbed out of the fire escape. The house he was leaving was the second one from the corner, and faced an unlighted street. Opposite him were the rear walls of a gloomy row of tenement houses, and an occasional light gleamed among the tiers of darkened windows. He glanced down the perpendicular length of ladder, and shuddered.

"Miss Tarbel," he began, "if anything should hap—" But Arabella had shut the window.

Taking his shoes between his teeth, the poet seized the bar of the ladder, and carefully lowered himself down. He was not an acrobat; even as a boy the gymnasium had been a chamber of horrors to him; and now, in spite of the semi-darkness, his head swam dizzily. He negotiated the fourth ladder successfully, and, landing upon the roof extension, drew on his shoes. For a fearful moment, he leaned, peering into the darkness. There was no help for it; dropping his feet over the edge, he closed his eyes and let go.

A second later, he landed upon some bulky object, that slid from under him, and then rolled over, with a great

crash. He lay for a moment, dreading to move; but a sound like the striking of a match unnerved him, and he dashed for the intervening fence between him and the corner yard. With an agility that surprised himself, he clambered over.

The next moment a thunder of sound crashed against his ear drums, and he saw a hairy and indignant object tugging at a chain, a short distance away. Shrinking, Adrien cowered against the wall, just as a window on the first floor opened and a woman's voice called:

"What's the matter, Lascar? Si-sik-catch 'em, Lascar!"

The brute's efforts to obey were worthy of a better cause, but the chain held.

"Wait a moment, Lascar," and Adrien heard the snap of a match.

Then a long, corrugated face, with a wisp of gray hair twisted into a tight knot at the top of its head, gleamed weirdly out of the darkness, like a materialized nightmare. The face possessed a very long, pointed nose, that swung the poet's way like the point on a compass.

"Murder!" shrieked the owner of the nose. "Murder! Police!"

"Madam," quavered the agitated poet, coming out of the shelter of the wall, "pray, allow me to explain!"

"Keep orf!" squawked the woman. "Police!"

Several windows went up, and the poet made a wild break for the fence. As his gripping fingers touched the lock, the gate was thrown open, and two ungentle hands gripped his tender biceps. Adrien looked up at the six-feet-two of blue uniform towering over him.

"Leg-go, officer!" he panted. "It's all a lil' mistake. You're hurting my arms—leg-go!"

The one in blue took a fresh hold. "What yer doin' in there?" he demanded.

"Trying to get out," gasped the poet. "Let go—that's a good fellow!"

"We'll see what's the row in here first."



Madam gazed after him philosophically.

Adrien felt himself propelled to the window, where the glare of a lighted gas jet fell full upon him.

"Arrest him, policeman!" screamed the woman. "He tried to climb in me winder, an' me a lone widder!"

A murmur of execration went up from the various interested heads protruding from the tenement windows.

"Madam," expostulated the poet, "tell the truth. You know I did not go near——"

"Let's have a look at you!" The officer threw back the poet's soft felt hat, and peered into his face. Then he smiled happily. "Ye kin go ter sleep in peace, missus—he won't climb in nor out of no more winders ter-night," said Policeman Number Thirty-nine.

The happenings of the next twenty minutes passed like a feverish dream to the poet. Late, or, rather, early as was the hour, there were still many stragglers on the street, and his captor seemed to take an unholy joy in dragging him through the most lighted of thoroughfares. As they neared the station, there was a slight diversion. The thought of his manuscript sudden-

ly flashed across the poet's consciousness, and, raising a trembling hand, he fumbled at his coat. The next moment he felt his wrists twisted together and something hard and cold closed over them, with an inexorable click.

"Yer would, would yer?" said Policeman Number Thirty-nine.

As Adrien and his captor entered the sergeant's office, the poet looked eagerly at that uniformed individual; here at least was a responsible person, to whom he could protest.

"Well?" The great man raised his head; it was a large and almost perfectly round head, covered with reddish hair and set upon a thick neck.

"If you will permit me to explain this——" began the poet.

The owner of the head turned light, aggressive eyes upon him, eyes whose glance suggested a blow.

"Hold your tongue!" he bellowed. "Well?" he said again, to Policeman Number Thirty-nine.

Dazedly, Adrien listened to the latter's story. Only once, when accused of furiously assaulting his captor on the way, did he interrupt.

"Yes," proceeded Number Thirty-nine, when the poet was put back to where he belonged. "He was violent—very violent." He looked at Adrien's manacled wrists, and shook his head sadly.

The sergeant took up his pen. "Name and address," he demanded, without looking up.

"Ad-Adrien Gr-Greene, West Twenty-third Street," stammered the poet.

"Speak up! What occupation?"

"Poet."

"What?" roared the sergeant.

"He tole me his name was Adam Bell, and that he wuz a janitor, sir," put in Number Thirty-nine.

"Search him," commanded the sergeant.

Adrien yielded his person to the ordeal with alacrity. Now, at least, his pocketbook and roll of manuscript would establish his identity. Quickly, there was a little pile of articles on the sergeant's desk—a few dollar bills, an unsigned invitation from a friend to take dinner, a few keys, and a fountain pen.

"That's all, sir," said the policeman. "He must hev dropped the gun he pulled on me in the struggle."

The poet was too agitated to resent this last imputation.

"Sir," he entreated of the head behind the desk, "my manuscript is missing—my lifework! I appeal to your humanity——"

"Take him below," said the sergeant, "and let the doctor see him in the morning."

It was a cold, white morning, as Adrien climbed into the patrol wagon, with a dozen other prisoners. His face was blotched and pallid, his hair hung dankly over a rumpled collar, and his eyes, stiff from straining through the semi-darkness of the cell, moved painfully in their sockets. Moreover, he had been unable to swallow the weak coffee and unpalatable bread doled out to the "accidentals" as a morning meal, and, for the first time in his pampered life, the poet was hungry. The memory of the last few hours remained like a blur upon his consciousness. He knew vaguely that he had lain in aching discomfort, watching the flicker of the gas jet in the corridor, and listening to a discordant voice in an adjoining cell rasping out a Salvation Army hymn. Just now, he was a converging point for the eyes of his fellow prisoners, as he sat wedged between a frowsy woman and a thin, gray-headed old man.

"Wut yer up fer?" voiced the latter, lurching over the poet's shoulder.

Adrien turned his head disgustedly, and moved an inch or two nearer the woman, who immediately sidled up to him, with an affectionate grimace.

"Nice day, ain't it, sonny?" she smirked.

The unhappy poet twisted about, and once more faced his beery neighbor.

"Say," whispered the latter, dropping a tear on Adrien's coat sleeve, "wuz yer ever saved? Hey?" he repeated, getting no answer. "Wuz yer ever——"

"No!" said the poet sulkily.

He of the watery eyes heaved a yeasty sigh. "I wuz—on'y yesterday. But the devil tempted me, an' I fell—yes, sir—fell off the curbstone, an' the cop comes along an' brings me here, like a common bum—me, that wuz saved on'y that very mornin'!"

The corner passenger, a pretty girl, with a tousled mass of light hair, leaned toward him.

"Wut y'up fer?" she asked, in a cautious whisper.

"Well, really," said the embarrassed poet, "it would be difficult to explain."

The girl nodded understandingly. "Never mind—jest brace up! Git old Baldy Johnstone—ye'll see him in the coirt—a funny little man, wid no hair an' half a nose—yer can't miss him. He'll fix yer up, if anybody kin."

"All out!" growled the guard on the step, as the Black Maria heaved to a standstill.

Adrien and his fellow prisoners were hustled up some steps and into a room dadoed with wooden benches. Shrinking into a corner, the poet tried to think. He must call witnesses to prove his identity—but whom? He was not a favorite with men; and of his women friends and admirers, only Madam Delanie and Miss Tarbel would be of use, though the latter might not enjoy being mixed up in the thing, he reflected.

As he gazed about him helplessly, his glance fell upon an undersized man, with a nose that seemed to have been scooped hollow at the bridge, and a head hairless and smooth as an elongated billiard ball. The latter approached Adrien, a suave smile stretching his thin lips.

"William Johnstone, at your service, sir. They call me Baldy Johnstone." He seated himself beside Adrien. "I have been watching you from the courtroom, sir," he went on confidentially. "I

saw at a glance that you were no ordinary man."

It was the first incense that Adrien had received in twenty-four hours.

"It was this way," he began; and then it all came out.

The lawyer listened attentively, making notes the while. "And what did you say was Miss Tarbel's address?" he asked.

The poet paled. "Why—I—well—you see, I had never been there before, and——"

Baldy Johnstone nodded. "Yes—yes—that will be all right. I'll look it up in the directory. Artist, you say—painter?"

"Yes," said the poet, with a momentary satisfaction, "painter of the 'Shrine' at the Metropolitan, you know."

The lawyer stood up briskly. "Leave it all to me, Mr. Greene. Your witnesses will be here in half an hour."

Some time later, Adrien found himself standing in the courtroom where a vast volume of voice was calling: "Adrien Green—alias Adam Bell—alias a poet." As he clung for support to the railing, while Policeman Number Thirty-nine preferred his charge, he felt the glances of the peopled court beating upon him like cold hail.

"Well, sir; what have you to say?"

Adrien looked up and met the unsympathetic gleam of a pair of small black eyes peering from a wide expanse of face.

"That it is all a mistake," the poet stammered. His voice broke from nervousness, and the words jostled each other in his throat.

The magistrate had a long upper lip, and the mouth thereof looked like a slit in a piece of discolored canvas. "How did you get into this yard?" he asked sternly.

"Down the fire escape," said the poet desperately. "I was visiting a—a lady friend, and"—his voice trailed away as a couple of newspaper men snickered audibly.

"Why didn't you leave in the usual manner?" demanded the magistrate.

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"I—I couldn't open the door," falter Adrien.

A gust of laughter from the onlookers made the magistrate pound the desk with his gavel. "Silence!" he commanded sternly.

Baldy Johnstone stepped forward briskly, and the poet leaned against the railing, wiping his crimson face as he listened to the lawyer's smooth, convincing tones. Presently there was a slight movement in the rear of the room and Adrien saw a tall, graceful girl enter. Her hair was like rolled sunshine, and the delicate blue of her tailor-made costume leaped from the gleam of a sapphire pin in her dainty tie to the deeper blue of her eyes. One of the newspaper men sat up stiffly, and the other stealthily adjusted the ends of his tie. With a shudder, Adrien remembered his ungroomed appearance; truly, this was a ridiculous position for a poet!

"Miss Amelia Tarbel!" called the crier, and the blonde girl moved haughtily forward.

The poet turned a bewildered gaze upon Baldy Johnstone, but the latter nodded reassuringly, whispered a word to the girl, and led her forward.

"One of the witnesses for the accused, your honor," he said suavely.

"Do you know the prisoner at the bar?" asked the magistrate.

The eyes of the blonde girl swept the poet's shrinking person like an icy wind. "I have never seen the man before in my life," she said clearly.

Adrien leaned over the railing. "Your honor," he gasped agitatedly, "there is some mis——"

"Silence!" commanded the magistrate.

Baldy Johnstone whispered a question in the poet's ear. Then he thrust his bald head forward. "Your honor," he explained, "there has been some confusion of identities. This young lady who has been unfortunately summoned is a stranger to us. Our witness is Miss Tarbel, painter of 'The Shrine'——"

"I am Amelia Tarbel, painter of 'The

Shrine," said the blonde girl, with cold distinctness.

"The lady I know is Arabella," cried the poet wildly. "Arabella Tar——"

"Yes, Mr. Greene," piped a shrill voice from the end of the courtroom. "Here I am, Mr. Greene!"

"Silence!" thundered the magistrate. "This is disgraceful. Officer——"

"Your honor," interposed Baldy Johnstone, "our witnesses have now arrived."

The blonde girl sailed from the room. She did not again look at Adrien, and the poet shivered. Never mind, he would write her a note of explanation and apology. Suddenly a gleam of white light shot across the grayness of his thoughts—his lines to the painter of "The Shrine"? She also had blue eyes; he would send them to her, and—who knows? Becoming aware that Miss Tarbel Number One was speaking, he turned a chill glance upon her. The glaring light of the courtroom did not deal kindly with Arabella, and the poet closed his eyes; he would fain have closed his ears, as she detailed the happenings of the previous night.

"You may stand down," said the magistrate presently. "That will do."

Madam Delanie pressed eagerly forward. "No doubt, your honor is familiar with Mr. Greene's work," she said in her reception tones. "You have surely read the 'Haunted Pool and Ot——'"

"Case dismissed!" said the magistrate. "Next!"

Hastily, the poet thrust what money he had with him into Baldie Johnstone's hand. "Call at my rooms to-night and we'll settle up," and he hurried from the court.

In the corridor, Madam Delanie and Arabella were whispering together. The poet looked at them sternly, and Madam Delanie came forward.

"My dear Adrien," she bubbled. "How could you ever have imagined Arabella to be the painter of 'The Shrine'?"

"Madam," said the poet with a bow, "it will remain a mystery to me!"

Arabella wilted under his frosty stare. "Here is your manuscript, Mr. Greene," she said weakly. "I found it on the fire escape."

The poet seized it joyfully. "Is this all?" he demanded.

"All but—but the few lines you wrote last night."

"Addressed to the painter of 'The Shrine'? Give them to me!"

Arabella looked at him appealingly, but his eyes met hers with the pale gleam of frozen water. Tremulously she drew a scrap of paper from her muff and handed it to him.

The poet tucked it carefully into his breast pocket, and lifted his hat.

"Now, ladies, I have the pleasure to wish you both good morning!"

Madam gazed after him philosophically. "Never mind," she said, taking the arm of the trembling Arabella, "there's Professor Tuttingham left, and he thinks you have very pretty teeth."

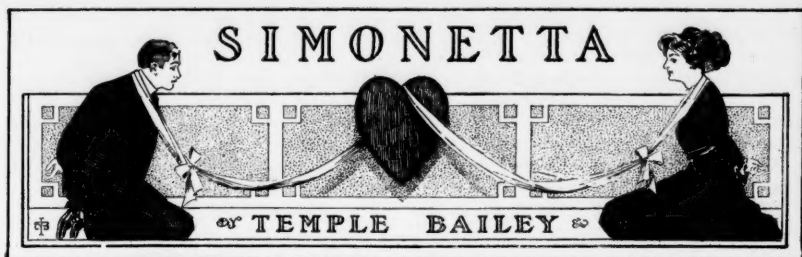


A Day Transfigured

THIS morning, born so dull and gray,
The wind still wet with last night's rain,
An autumn leaf, a crimson stain
Splashed, for all color, on the clay,

Brought, after all, its glad surprise;
Mid-road I met you, blown about
But laughing, and the sun broke out
And laughed, too, in my ravished eyes!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



ILLUSTRATED BY NORMAN IRVING BLACK

THE girl, having lived for so long on the ragged edge of nothing, gasped at the judge's proposition.

"You mean it?"

"Yes, I'll pay all of your expenses and give you an extra five hundred if you succeed."

Simonetta laughed—a laugh of infinite content. Her beauty glowed and sparkled until even the judge's old eyes were dazzled.

"You'll do," he said, under his breath.

Simonetta leaned across his desk, and asked confidentially:

"What made you think of it?"

The judge's hand came down heavily on a letter that lay on his blotter.

"I got this—this morning—from my boy. The young fool! And I made up my mind that I would punish him. Then you came in, and wanted work. And there's something about you"—the grave sternness of the judge's voice contradicted all hint of flattery—"there is something about you that I like—and he'd like it. The kid has enough of his dad in him for that, and, oh, well, all you've got to do is to *do it*."

Simonetta stood up in the shabby black gown, whose cheap cut could not spoil the beauty of her slenderness. Her hair was burnished copper, her eyes were gray, and there was about her an air of unconquerable youth.

"It's like a fairy tale," she said, "and even if I don't succeed, I'll have the fun."

The judge, opening the door to let her out, prophesied: "You won't fail."

She turned on the threshold. "I ought to be chaperoned," she said. "It won't do for me to go to a hotel like that alone."

"Do you know any one who could go—"

"There's Maggie," she said. "I'd make her wear black, with little white bands at her neck and wrists. She'd have the time of her life."

He put out his hand. "I'll leave all that to you," he told her. "All that I ask is that you'll make him love you."

Simonetta seemed after that to float down on the elevator in a rosy cloud.

"Maggie," she said, to the woman who was waiting at the door of the big office building. "Maggie, I've got a place. Let's go somewhere and get a soda, and talk." And together they swept out into the crowded street.

"We've only got twenty-five cents," Maggie objected, "and you haven't got your pay—"

Simonetta opened her shabby little bag, and there was a flash of yellow-backed bills.

"It's the first installment. Oh, Maggie, Maggie, you never heard such a wonderful thing in your life."

"Well, for Heaven's sake, get somewhere and tell me," Maggie said. "People will think you are crazy if you go on like this."

In the fashionable confectioner's, the tall girl in the shabby black, with flam-



"Yes, I'll pay all of your expenses and give you an extra five hundred if you succeed."

ing cheeks and sparkling eyes, did not escape notice.

"Go 'way back," Maggie whispered. "You look so glad that they'll be calling out the reporters to ask about the wedding."

"It's almost like a wedding," Simonetta said, as they took their seats in a shadowy corner. "Oh, Maggie, I'm to have an outfit like a trousseau——"

"Oh, tell it," Maggie urged.

So Simonetta told the tale, which

in its beginning smacked of the Arabian Nights, and which was yet, in the end, essentially modern, in its dependence upon the power of money.

"His son—he's only twenty-three—has gone back on the girl he was engaged to, and the judge is furious. The match was planned from the time they were children; and now the judge wants me to go to the place they are staying and make him fall in love with me; and then throw him over."

Maggie's square face expressed her perplexity. "But I don't see," she began.

"The judge wants him to be hurt, hard, and he thinks I can do it." Suddenly Simonetta smiled, the radiant smile of confident beauty. "And I think I can, too, Maggie, with the clothes."

Maggie shook her head. "I'm not sure that I like it," she said. "You might just as well have stuck to the stage."

Simonetta's eyes blazed. "I hate the stage, Maggie. I told the judge that father brought me up to it, and that now that he was dead I felt that if I wasn't good enough for the best, I was too good for the worst. And that was why I was looking for other work, to pay for my training."

"It don't seem that this is much better," Maggie persisted.

"Ah, Maggie," Simonetta's voice took on a coaxing note, "think what it will mean—to have all the pretty clothes I want, and five hundred clear at the end."

"Yes," Maggie was weakening.

"And when he said that I mustn't tell anybody, I said: 'I must tell Maggie.' And he said: 'Who's Maggie?' And I said: 'The dearest thing in the world—and she's been like a mother.'"

They squeezed hands under the table.

"And now we'll go to the shops," Simonetta planned, as she finished her soda. "I'm going to buy the underneath things to-day, Maggie, and then to-morrow we'll get the gowns, the wonderful gowns that will match my hair, for I'm going to take the place by storm, Maggie."

She did take the place by storm, and as she was al-

ways under the protecting wings of the metamorphosed Maggie, her lack of social credentials was forgiven, since she spoke vaguely of mines and magnificence in the far West.

She had the good sense to make her gowns subordinate to her own youthful beauty, and there was nothing of boldness or of self-consciousness in her manner when on that first night she came down the stairway of the big hotel in pale yellow chiffon, with a wreath of daffodils and a girdle of beaten gold.

The judge's son saw her as she stood for a moment, hesitating on the landing.



She stood for a moment, hesitating on the landing.

"Who is she?" he asked, and could not take his eyes from her; and she, not knowing that he was the man she sought, looked into his upturned face and felt a strange stirring within her soul. And that was fate!

It was such a simple thing to make him love her—in that the judge had known his son. And it is here that Simonetta's story really begins, for the moment that a woman grapples with fate, is her real moment of birth. Hitherto Simonetta had fought against the ugly facts of existence. She had hated the life that her father had made her lead, but now she began to hate herself.

Of course, she tried to make excuses.

"He must be a cad, Maggie," she said one night, as she came into Maggie's room to brush her hair, "or he wouldn't have treated the girl that way."

"Well, I like his looks and I haven't seen the girl."

Maggie was wrapping her carefully dressed head in a veil. In spite of Simonetta's lavish expenditure, Maggie had known the pinch of poverty, and she refused to be curled and waved oftener than twice a week.

"Well, I've seen her," Simonetta spoke through a golden mist. "She came back yesterday; and she's like a snowdrop, and she's awfully hurt; but he doesn't know it."

Maggie climbed into bed, and, propped up by the pillows, lay like a mummy in her enveloping veil.

"Now what," she asked, "does the judge expect to get out of it?"

"He thinks," said Simonetta, "that if the boy is hurt, he will turn back for sympathy—to her." She caught her breath.

"Well, he won't," was Maggie's carefully delivered opinion. "Men ain't that kind."

"Oh, men!" Simonetta flung her hair back from her face and stood up. "There are no men. They are all children—little, mistaken children. And that is why we women—love them."

Maggie sat up with the face of the

tragic muse. "There, I knew that was what would happen," she accused.

For a moment Simonetta's glance defied her; then she said slowly: "Yes, that is what has happened, Maggie." And she fell on her knees by the bed.

The next morning, Maggie said: "Let's go back home, Simonetta. There's worse things than poverty. Sometimes when I'm trailing these long gowns over the rugs, and holding up my head and trying to keep my mouth shut, and pretending to be swell, and eating seven-course dinners, I just wish that I was back in our old hall room with a frying pan full of frankfurters, and you coming in with your face shining, for a comfortable supper and a comfortable talk."

"I can't go back on my bargain," Simonetta said tensely. "I've got to keep faith with the judge."

She was keeping faith with the judge when, that afternoon, she climbed the mountainside with his son, and, in the dim greenness of the forest, told him "no" when he asked her to marry him.

"You love me, Simonetta," he said masterfully. "I'm not a fool. I know that you love me."

Her eyes did not meet his, but she said lightly. "I love myself better, and you mustn't ask me again—never, never, never!"

"I shall ask you until you say 'yes.'"

"I shall never say 'yes.'"

"Simonetta!"

"It—it has all been very jolly, little boy, but we mustn't call it—love."

"Simonetta!"

"Oh, stop saying my name over and over again. It—it sounds idiotic." Her laugh, echoing and reëchoing among the hills, came back with a hollow sound.

"Then it has all been a game?"

"Yes," defiantly. "Why not? Men and women play it and call it love; and if one of them is hurt—it's all in the game."

"I have never played it."

Her eyes blazed, "Such a nice little lie," she mocked. "A little bird told me that there was a girl before me."



And Simonetta's heart said: "Why not?"

"Helen?"

She nodded.

"Oh, Helen didn't care. She didn't care a rap. We had just grown up together, and everything was planned for us. And when I found out that it wasn't real love that I felt I sounded her, and I saw that she felt the same way. She doesn't care a rap for me."

She looked into his eyes and saw that he was telling the truth; out of his ignorance he was telling the truth. He had stuck a knife into a woman's heart, but he did not know that he was an assassin.

"Marry me, Simonetta," the boy persisted, and Simonetta's heart said: "Why not?"

Maggie said: "Why not?" too, when Simonetta told her.

"I guess I wouldn't stick to any old bargain with his father," she advised. "The boy's got his own money, so what difference would it make if you did lose the five hundred?"

"It isn't that," said Simonetta. The lights were out, and she was sitting by the window in Maggie's room. "It isn't that. If he didn't have a cent in the world I'd marry him. If I had to work my fingers to the bone I'd marry him. He's the man I want, Maggie, he's the man I want!"

"Then take him," said Maggie.

But Simonetta shook her head. "What could I tell him," she asked slowly, "of my life with my father, of the bargain I made with his father? Do you think any man's love could stand that, Maggie?"

Maggie considered. "A man's love will stand most anything," she decided.

"Yes, now while it's new. But I'm not his kind, and he'd find it out. That little Helen snowdrop is his kind. She's like his mother and the women of his family, and he'd want me to be. Oh, yes, he would. Men like conventional women in their homes. But if I let him go now he'll always remember me; that I was beautiful and that I came into his life and went out of it like a dream. And I'd rather have him think of me that way than to have him know of the little hall room and the frankfurters, and the bargain I made with his father, and the lies I have told. He'd hate me, oh, Maggie, he'd hate me!"

"He wouldn't. No man could hate you, Simonetta."

Simonetta rose and crossed the room to where the moonlight, striking across a long mirror, reflected her beauty mistily. She raised her arms and the folds of her thin white robe fell back. Her unbound hair was blown by the breeze from the open window, so that she seemed caught in a web of gold.

"I am beautiful, Maggie," she said in a hushed voice, "but when my beauty fades, what then?"

The next day Simonetta went back to the judge. She had on the shabby black gown and she was very pale.

"Well, he asked me," she said, "and I—I turned him down."

The judge looked at her keenly. "What's the matter then?" he demanded.

For a moment she was silent, and then she raised her eyes. "I fell in love with him myself."

Before the misery of her glance the judge was dumb.

"I never thought of that," he stammered finally.

"No, of course not." And her voice trailed off into silence.

The judge reached for his check book. "Well, anyhow, you've earned the money." He tried to say it cheerfully.

"Yes," she said dully, "I've earned the money. At first I thought I wouldn't take it. It didn't seem as if I could. But I've got to get something out of it, haven't I? I can't wear the clothes—not the way I live here—people would talk."

The judge filled in the amount and signed his name. As he handed her the blue slip his eyes answered the mute appeal in hers.

"What are you going to do?" he asked gently.

"Learn to—sing."

"And then?"

"Go on the stage."

"You'll succeed with your youth and beauty," he comforted her.

She flung out her hands. "Ah, but I might have married him!"

The judge started. "What?"

"I might have married him," the girl repeated dryly. "It would have been worth more to me than the five hundred. It would have been worth more to me than money. It would have been worth more to me than heaven!" She caught her breath gaspingly.

Then she went to the door and opened it. On the threshold she turned and looked back.

"Don't you ever tell him," she said. "Don't you ever tell him!"

And when he had promised, she went out and shut the door.





At the Musicale

By Susie Bouchelle Wight

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

THE tenor's voice soared, and softly sank into silence. The room resounded with handclappings, and a chorus of enthusiastic exclamations, but the professor put one hand before his cynical young mouth and yawned.

"Why do you do that?" the girl leaned toward him curiously. "Don't you like his voice?"

"Oh, well enough; but it bores me the way these love songs always bring in something about dying."

"Oh!" The way she looked at him

over her fan was very irritating to a serious-minded youth.

"Perhaps you can explain it," he scoffed.

"Perhaps. I can do it better in the garden, though."

"I don't see why. There are bugs out there, and toads, and mosquitoes, and——"

"And moonlight, and roses, and stars in the summer night," she mocked gayly.

"Come, then!" He arose abruptly. "I think he is going to delight his au-



She looked at him very steadily for a moment.

dience again. He probably will drag the moonlight and the starlight and the rest of it in before he finishes his ditty. I'd as well go."

"At any rate, it is better to sing of beautiful things, and to see them, than to let your thoughts dwell on bugs and toads and mosquitoes."

The dainty form at his side swayed toward him, and the tip of one bare white shoulder brushed against his hand, as he held wide the garden door

for her to pass through. She laughed silently to herself, and drew up a lace scarf that had fallen to her elbows.

"Do you know"—her voice was soft and sweet with little ripples all underneath—"it is a distinctly new experience for me to have a man consent to walk in the garden with me as the lesser of two evils?"

"Is it? If you don't like it, I hope you will not feel obliged to come," he rejoined politely.

"Oh, it is an experience, and experience is a *dear* schoolmaster. I am especially partial to schoolmasters, you know," she concluded frivolously, with an altogether new emphasis on the old maxim.

He bowed silently, and she curtsied saucily back.

"I've heard that the partiality was for schoolboys," said he, as they sat down on the broad stone balustrade.

"The truth is that I am fond of both. What are you thinking about with that black frown on your face—boys or bugs?"

"Neither. Of the silliness of love songs."

"I've heard some folks call love itself silly."

"You said you could perhaps explain why the songs always drag in something about dying."

"Yes," she dropped her eyes modestly. "I think I can, in a way. I never wrote love songs—I've been in love, though."

"Doubtless!" Something made the professor's voice ring out a little sharply.

"Haven't you?" she inquired innocently, and then without waiting for his reply, she proceeded: "Of course you haven't, though, or you would not need to have things explained. Now, I'll have to begin at the beginning." She drew her skirts aside and made room for him to move out of the way of the bobbing rose spray. He moved toward her a little suspiciously, and when a lace frill blew against his knee, he pushed it away.

"I've heard that you are an inveterate flirt!" he said abruptly.

"Now, I wonder," she remarked dispassionately, "why you tell me that."

"Oh, I don't know, unless I was reminded by what you said about having been in love."

"Oh, that! It is all in the way of experience. It comes eventually to the best of women—and the most sensible of men. If I tell you things to-night, it is only to prepare you for what you must inevitably undergo, and I will have to begin at the beginning because,

after all, there isn't a great deal that one *can* tell."

"Proceed." The professor used exactly the tone that would have been vouchsafed to a pupil beginning a recitation.

"It begins very subtly, you know." The girl swung one white-slipped foot as she talked. "You have, first, a queer feeling that you long to be with that other person, and with it a feeling of dread to see—that other person. You understand, don't you?"

"Oh, surely. Anything so clear as that, only I don't quite understand how you identify—that other person."

"Don't you? Well, you'll know when the time comes. You will not need an explanation of the identity of—"

"The party of the second part."

"Oh, thank you. I didn't know what to call a person who might be either him or her—I mean, he or she, as the case might happen to be. Well, when you are with the party of the second part, you are always thinking in personalities, however much you may be conversing in abstractions."

"Perhaps that accounts for some of the silliness of the songs."

"Probably; but you always come round to the personalities at last, you know; and when you are talking, even in abstractions, you are always longing and—dreading, to look into the eyes of the party of the second part. You look, occasionally, but not for very long at a time, because—"

"Yes?"

"Oh, just because."

"That is very clear indeed, and what then?"

"Oh, after you get to this point, there is a season where mere speech is entirely inadequate. You can sit for hours together, and not say a word. You just—commune."

The bit of flounce blew against his knee again, and he forgot to remove it, but stroked it absent-mindedly. The girl smiled to herself, and turned her head aside.

"Then it is," she went on very softly, "that one begins to think of death, when life has grown so sweet—so

sweet! It seems the final test of things to be able to say, and feel, that one would die, if necessary or at all desirable, for—the party of the second part, just when life has grown to mean so much. Can you faintly catch the idea?"

"I regret to say that my inexperience is so deep that I cannot."

The professor had been stirring uneasily during her last speech, and he stood suddenly before her, frowning. She laughed up at him impishly.

"When I get to talking of dying to parties of the second part," she confessed above the tip of her fan, "it is not from unselfish motives. The parties always catch their breath at the thought of *me* passing away in my youth and bloom—they protest—they say such beautiful things to me—and I like to hear them. I do the speaking, you understand, but I take care to let the parties of the second part do all the *thinking*; for the very idea of it, if ever I were to let it get beyond a mere word, would frighten me—frighten me."

She shivered as she spoke, and then grew silent, and in the moonlight he watched a shadow rest for a moment on her face.

"Is that all you had to tell me?" he asked coldly.

"It is about all I *can* tell you, because so much of it can't be spoken, even in a love song."

"You seem quite experienced in such matters."

"An inveterate flirt' has to be."

The shadow still rested, and something made him say quickly:

"Perhaps I should not have told you that. I am sorry."

"Even though it be the truth?"

"Is it the truth? I'll take your word."

"Even against appearances?"

They were walking slowly in a broad track of light that streamed from an open door, and she lifted her face so that he could see the limpid blue of her eyes, the little quiver of her scarlet mouth. He looked at her steadily, and the frown faded from his handsome, stern young face. He drew a deep breath, as he waited for her answer.

"Is it true?" he asked again.

"Would you feel very dreadfully if I were to say that it is? I would not like to deceive any one so truthful as yourself. Would you be sorry?"

"I think I would. I think I'd be very sorry."

"Why?"

"Shall I tell you?"

She looked at him very steadily for a moment. Because she was a woman and because she was very experienced in playing with men's hearts, she knew what depended upon her reply. She had watched him shun her, only to come reluctantly to her side again and again, usually to quarrel, always to hold himself in stern aloofness. She dropped her eyes because she felt tears welling in them, and this was not a time to let him see them—not until she could decide. Decide? That was exactly what she could not do—he would come back—he would not go away. She must have time to think it over—to make up her mind, for once she let him speak there would be an end to all the others. To-morrow, now—to-morrow would—

"Shall I tell you why I wish you to assure me what you really are in your heart?" he asked again, most gently, and there were tones in his voice that made her tremble so that she could not trust herself to be in earnest. She still looked down, studying the gravel in the path at her feet.

"It seems to me," she said slowly, "that for such a serious-minded man, you are progressing rather rapidly from abstractions to personalities."

And suddenly catching her lace skirts about her ankles, she ran lightly up the broad steps. From the top she looked down at him, and laughed an invitation, but he did not follow. She watched him as he raised his hat and disappeared in the night.

"He will come back to-morrow," she said to herself, a little frightened. "He will be angry, and he has a right to be—I have done this way so many times, and in so many different ways. He will come back, and he will make me feel his disapproval, and I shall adore



"What frightened you so?" he whispered, soothing her as one would a frightened child.

him because he will not crawl. I will just smooth it all away, and I'll watch that dark face grow tender and sweet, and when his eyes look at me—oh, like *that*—I am going to tell him just what he wants me to say—and won't beg for."

She sighed happily, and turned toward the room with its lights and laughter.

Bang! The noise of a pistol shot rang out from the garden gate! Oh, had he cared so much—had he—
Oh! She was flying over the gravel in

the direction that he had taken—crying, sobbing, fearing for what she might see. When she came upon him he was bending over on one knee.

"Howard—Howard! Oh, what have you done!" Her arms were about him, and she scarce dared to look upon his face.

In another instant she was raised up in his arms. His face was close to hers in the half light.

"What frightened you so? What was it you feared?" he whispered, soothing her as one would a frightened child.

"Oh—I thought you had shot—yourself—because I was such a frivolous thing——"

His kiss stopped her half-sobbing words.

He held her close, and did not speak for a moment.

"Well—well—well!" came in a chorus from the group pressing upon each other in the path between the shrubbery. "What in the world——"

"Nothing whatever, except an exploded tire!" The young professor motioned toward a machine standing dimly out in the road. He did not put away the clinging arms about his neck. "And Rotha, running to see, came near stepping upon the finest specimen of the *Agaricus Campestris* that I ever saw."

"Rotha! Rotha! When did you get so well acquainted?" asked a saucy girl, peering up into her face.

"Only since she became my fiancée," returned the professor, with a bow.



The Conquerors

THOUGH fools that feed on woe, in dark misgiving,
May bow their backs to bear a primal curse,
Undaunted hearts shall hymn the bliss of living
And all the joy that thrills a universe.

Bewail no fate nor sigh for rest Elysian;
Defy no fate with stern, rebellious soul;
They laugh with fate who see, with broader vision,
That they and fate are parts of one great whole.

Rejoice in all of life, her rue and roses;
In toil, in strife, in pain, in quiet breath,
In Being's self—so, when the chapter closes,
We'll drink, praise God, an unknown joy in death.

Then, forward, surge of pale, illumined faces!
Achieve the moon and storm the slopes of Mars!
Unchained, we'll rove the glad, eternal spaces,
True heirs of all that lies beyond the stars.

ARTHUR GUITERMAN.

THE MAN IN PINK

By ELLIOTT FLOWER

Drawings by G.W. HARTING



JETSON and his *aéroplane* 'runabout' swept toward the landing park. He shut off the motor and let himself glide, merely guiding. Then, suddenly, a cross current of wind struck the machine, and it careened and swerved from its course. Jetson commented irritably upon the vagaries of *aéroplanes* and wind, but a quick movement of levers steadied him, although not in time to enable him to make the landing. The motor was started again, and he soared away, circling back presently for another trial. This time he was successful.

"Haven't been joy riding with this, have you, James?" he asked of the man who, with a couple of assistants, was awaiting him.

"Me, sir?" exclaimed James, as if hurt by the insinuation. "Oh, no, sir."

"Well, it isn't running just right. I wish you'd look it over."

"To-night, sir?"

"No; to-morrow will do. I'll take the big tourist in the morning, so you'll have all day to see what's the matter with the runabout."

"Run the tourist yourself, sir?" asked James.

"Certainly not," answered Jetson.

"That's too much like work. Besides, I'll have one or two guests to entertain."

"Very good, sir," said James.

Jetson watched the men trundle the *aéroplane* to its berth in the air-ship shelter, and shook his head disconsolately.

"They take up too much room," he sighed. "No living in town any more, even for part of the year. Housing a fleet of air ships in town would wreck even a billionaire. Town is only for

the poor; the unfortunate rich are banished to the country. It is very hard, but one must live up to his station. Sometimes I wish I were poor enough to be independent."

He turned thoughtfully toward the house.

The night was warm, to put it mildly. Perhaps "insufferably hot" would be a better term. The electric fan in the library seemed merely to make a current of hot air. It was too warm to read, too warm to write, too warm to smoke, and, later, he found it too warm to sleep. Even a combination of gauzy pajamas and the electric fan did not bring him comfort. After trying and abandoning the bed, he wandered from place to place, from fan to fan, from window to window, in search of a cool spot, and found it not.

"It's better two or three hundred feet up," he reflected.

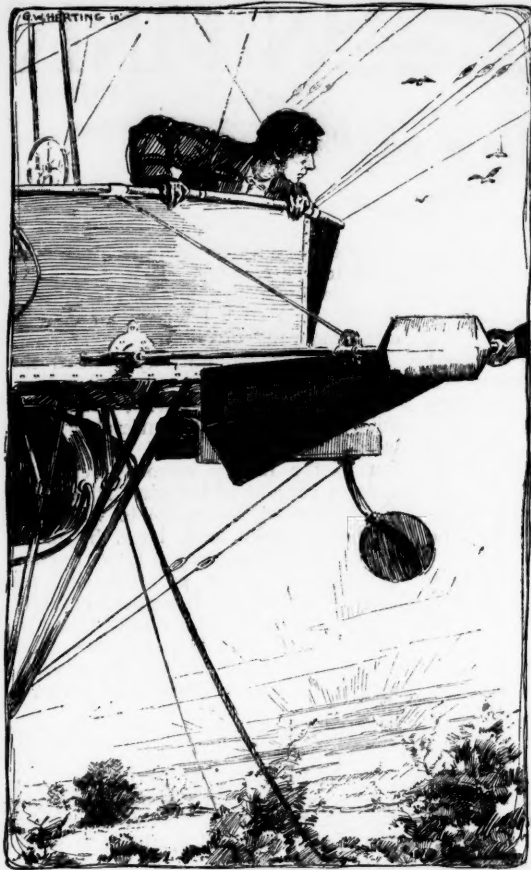
So, finally, he rang for James, which James, who had himself retired, thought most inconsiderate. Nevertheless, James responded, although somewhat *en dishabille*.

"Can't stand it down here, James," explained Jetson. "I think I'll have to go up for a breeze. There must be one up there somewhere. Anyhow, it will be something to get away from ground and buildings that are simply radiating heat."

"Very well, sir," returned James.

"Inflate the small dirigible," instructed Jetson, "just enough to float it at about three hundred feet, and then you can anchor me for the night. I'll sleep in it."

"I think there's enough gas in it for that now, sir," explained James. "It



But he was awake now—thoroughly awake.

wasn't deflated after the chef used it for his trip to market, but there's been some leakage."

"Good enough!" exclaimed Jetson. "Put some cushions in the car, and I'll be right out."

In pajamas, slippers, and a light dressing gown, Jetson presently sallied forth. The small dirigible was ready for him. It was rather wobbly, he noticed, in spite of its light ribs, but it had sufficient buoyancy for his purpose. Further inflation would be nec-

essary to make it rigid enough to be navigable, but it would serve as a captive balloon, and the automatic windlass and cable had been arranged for the ascent.

"Signal wire working?" asked Jetson.

"Yes, sir."

"All right. If you don't hear from me before, reel me down at eight o'clock, and tell Martin to have my bath ready at that hour."

He entered the car and improvised a very comfortable couch, then raised one hand to indicate that he was ready.

James released the car from its anchorage, pulled back a lever, and watched the automatic windlass pay out both signal wire and rope. Up, up, up the dirigible went, slowly and waveringly, until it reached the limit to which it could lift car and man. Then the anchoring lever made it fast. James watched it for a moment, to see that all was well, before returning to his bed.

Jetson found a breeze up there. It was not a strong breeze, being barely sufficient to make the car pull gently on the restraining rope, but it was a cool breeze—at least, cool enough to be in pleasing contrast with the air below. It had free sweep, and was less affected by the heat that earth and buildings had been storing up all day. A sigh of contentment escaped him as he felt it. The gentle rocking of the car was soothing, and he began to feel drowsy.

"By George!" he reflected, "wealth has its compensations, after all; it makes this possible." Then he slept.

II.

A touring car, containing a party of boisterous young men, swept along the highway. They had been celebrating, and the celebration was not yet over. Some of them were singing—that is, they thought they were singing. Anyhow, they were making a noise.

Suddenly, Watkins, who was at the wheel, shut off the power and put on the brake.

"What's the matter?" asked Perrin, from the tonneau.

Watkins pointed, and then they all saw it. An anchored dirigible hovered above in the moonlight. It was so close that they could follow visually the anchoring cable from car to windlass.

"Jetson is sleeping up again," remarked Watkins.

"Sleeping up?" repeated Perrin inquiringly.

"Yes," explained Watkins; "he always roosts high for the breeze when the nights are hot. I tell you, it makes me boil!"

"Boil to-night, anyhow, old man," put in Carle. "Jetson can't make me any hotter'n I am. What's wrong with him?"

"He's a gloater."

"A what?"

"A gloater—always flaunting his money and his luck in the faces of the less fortunate. It's enough to make anarchists, to see a man anchored out on a night like to-night. I believe he just likes to rub it in, does it purposefully, to create envy and discontent."

"That's right," agreed Tolliver. "Keeps a whole fleet of air ships, while the poor have to be satisfied with autos. It's a shame."

"There's others," commented Carle. "Oh, there's others that keep air ships," admitted Tolliver, "but he's got 'em beat a mile. I tell you, things ain't right when the poor have to stick to the lowways while the rich use the highways; the contrast is too strong. No wonder the poor man, with his measly old auto, gets sore."

"Aëroplanes don't cost so much," persisted Carle. "If you're so envious

of the man in the air, why don't you get one?"

"Where'd I keep it?" retorted Tolliver. "It takes room, doesn't it? You can't land it in a city street or stable it in an alley barn, can you? That's what makes it a rich-man affair. There are cheap aëroplanes and dear aëroplanes, but they're no use to us, unless a park is thrown in with them. And dirigible balloons—well, look at Jetson's establishment!"

They looked, and the truth of his contention was clear. Air ships might be only twenty cents apiece, and still the upkeep expense would put them beyond the reach of a man of moderate income. Jetson's establishment seemed like an ostentatious affront to less fortunate mortals.

"I'm going to take a fall out of him, right now," declared Watkins, jumping to the ground.

The others followed, although Carle showed some reluctance. Carle always liked to reason things out.

"Let's consider this," he urged. "Autos are cheap and common, of course, but they suit us better than air ships. They're more convenient for short runs and little outings. An air ship's of no real use, except for long runs, and then you've got to figure on a landing park at your destination. I don't see that the rich have got so much the best of it; they have to keep air ships for the sake of appearances, and most of us don't really need or want them."

"But look at the class distinction when the highways are exclusively for the rich and the lowways for the rest of us," objected Watkins.

"We find the rich on the lowways, too," persisted Carle.

"Sure," agreed Watkins. "They still have to use autos a good deal."

"Then there's another thing," Carle went on. "There's no real joy riding in an air ship."

"Why not?"

"Why not!" repeated Carle, in astonishment. "Haven't you heard the preachers and the W. C. T. U. proclaiming the air ship as the greatest

recent factor in the temperance movement. It takes a steady hand, a quick eye, and a clear brain—for passenger as well as aviator."

"God help the rich; the poor can drink," put in Perrin.

"Anyhow," insisted Watkins, "here goes for Jetson. I can't stand the luxury of a man sleeping up on a night like this. It makes the poor restive to see such luxury."

He set off in the direction of the windlass, the others following.

"An axe," he whispered, after a brief examination of anchor rope and signal wire. "Where can we find an axe?"

Tolliver found one in a tool shed. There was then some argument as to who should have the honor of turning this offensive plutocrat loose in the air, but the axe was finally given to Watkins. Carle alone put in no claim for it.

"Poor man!" sighed Carle. "I have no grudge against him. He has troubles enough. I've always heard that an air ship was its own punishment."

"Stand back!" ordered Watkins.

The next moment the axe swished through the air and descended upon rope and wire at the point where they left the reel.

Jetson floated gently away through the night.

III.

Miss Anita Coakley was awakened by the rattling of a window shade. She raised her head slightly from the pillow, and glanced toward the window.

Now, when a girl is awakened from a sound sleep, and sees at her window a man attired in something closely resembling pink pajamas, she is, doubtless, justified in screaming. Anyhow, Anita Coakley screamed. There was a balcony just outside the window, and the pale dawn showed a man on the balcony—a man who seemed on the point of entering the room, and who was clearly not attired for calling. So Anita Coakley screamed, and, having screamed, buried her head under the bedclothes.

When she finally mustered up cour-

age enough to look again, the man had disappeared. She waited, thinking her scream must have aroused some one, but nobody came. Then, at last, she slipped out of bed and crept to the window. He might be hiding on the balcony, but it was easier to investigate than to remain in a condition of nervous apprehension.

The balcony was a small affair, little more than the width of the window, supported by ornamental iron brackets, and unconnected with the ground below. To reach it from the lawn, a ladder would be necessary, unless one could climb the side of the house like a fly. Yet there was no ladder, and neither was there, now, any man. The dawning day showed not even a trace of pink pajamas.

"But he was here," she told herself. "I saw him. What can have become of him? And what was he doing at my window?"

These unanswered questions were disconcerting enough to put sleep out of the question, so she pulled down the shade and proceeded to dress herself. But always she watched that window, half expecting another interruption. But the shade now remained undisturbed.

Courage and clothing seemed to go together, and she was quite ready to pursue her investigations more boldly when she was fully dressed. She raised the shade, and stepped out on the balcony, but there was no clue to the mystery either there or on the lawn below. No ladder was in evidence, nor was there any rope.

"But he was here," she repeated. "I saw him."

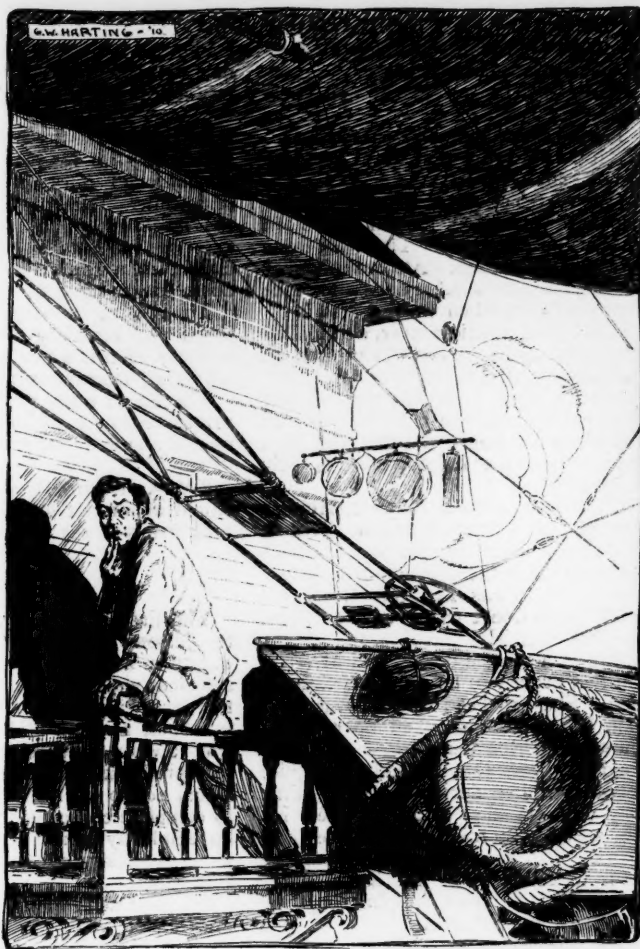
Turning her eyes toward the public square, she was almost as much startled as she had been when first awakened.

The Coakley residence faced a street that led directly to the square, a section of the centre of which was plainly visible from the balcony upon which Anita stood. The great flagpole was in this section. The great flagpole was in two parts, there being a crosstree where the topmast joined the main pole,

and, perched upon the crosstree, she discerned a pink man. Just what gave him the pinkish hue was not evident at that distance, but she surmised that the explanation was "pink pajamas."

He was, she decided, the same man who had looked in at her window. But why should a man in pink pajamas go about in the early morning, scaling balconies and climbing flagpoles? And how had he attained these perches? A little thought convinced her that he had not climbed the pole. That would have been an extremely difficult feat, and would have taken much time. How, then, had he transferred himself from the balcony to the crosstree? And why was he roosting there?

Others had discovered him, and a crowd was gathering in the square—a crowd that showed many evidences of hasty toilet. She could see various men motioning, and, apparently, also calling, to him to come down. The



"No place for me," he decided quickly.

town marshal was gesticulating authoritatively with his cane. But the man on the perch shook his head. "And I don't blame him," declared Anita. He shouted at the people below occasionally, but they seemed to find his words incomprehensible.

She slipped out and joined the crowd. "What's the matter with him?" she asked of the first man she met.

"Crazy," was the reply. "Any time you see a pink man roosting on a flag-pole, it's a safe bet he's crazy."

"How did he get there?" she persisted.

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"How are you going to get him down?" she went on.

"We're telephoning the fire department at Woodford for an extension ladder," he explained. "There isn't one here that will reach. Also telephoning the asylum to send guards to take charge of him when we get him."

She moved a little nearer, and looked up at him again. Then she uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"Good gracious!" was her mental comment. "I believe it's Mr. Jetson!"

Back to the house she ran, and soon appeared on the balcony with a pair of binoculars.

To look at a man in pink pajamas through binoculars did not seem a modest thing to do, but she felt that she must settle the question of his identity. And it was Mr. Jetson. There could be no doubt whatever about that. She had met Mr. Jetson a few weeks before at a seaside resort, and Mr. Jetson had proved to be a most delightful man. She had been told he was very rich, but of that she had no personal knowledge; she only knew that she liked him, and that he had been quite devoted to her during the brief time they were together at the seaside. He had asked if he might come to see her, and she had assured him he would be most welcome. But she had not expected him to come in pink pajamas and roost on a flagpole.

He was seated astride the crosstree, with his legs wrapped round the pole. This left his hands free, and those free hands were most mysteriously employed. He took a handkerchief from the pocket of his pajamas and tore a piece out of it. Then he passed a hand over pole and crosstree, as if searching for something. Whatever it was, he evidently found it, for there was considerable fumbling with both hands, after which one thumb seemed to call for close attention.

"Oh!" she cried, suddenly understanding. "He's got a splinter or a nail or something, and he's writing a message in blood."

It was even so. A small piece of linen fluttered away presently, but, unfortunately for his plan, the rest of the handkerchief fluttered away at the same time. The crowd below saw only the larger piece, but Anita kept her eyes on the smaller until she saw it caught in a bush. Then she hurried down to get it.

To receive a message written in blood was certainly romantic, and the mystery of this affair added to the bewildering fascination of it.

The bit of linen that she found had printed upon it, in straggling red letters, the single, but meaningful, word: "Pants!"

"Why, of course!" she cried. "How stupid of me not to think of it before! Jack has a closet full, and he's away."

IV.

The first inkling of his plight came to Jetson when the dragging rope caught in a tree. The car lurched with sufficient violence to awaken him. Then the rope was torn from the restraining branches, and he drifted on. But he was awake now—thoroughly awake. His predicament was sufficiently awkward, not to say serious, to bring him to complete consciousness instantly. To be helplessly adrift was bad enough; to be helplessly adrift in pink pajamas was worse.

His first act was to draw in the rope and signal wire, for he had no wish to find himself anchored inopportunistically. Then he gave his mind to a consideration of the facts and a solution of the problem. The car was loose—that much was evident—but how it had become loose, how long it had been loose, and how far he had drifted, he had no means of knowing. Dawning day showed that many hours had passed since he went to sleep, and he might have been drifting all of that time. The dirigible was floating much lower than before, showing that more

gas had been lost, and, furthermore, it was not a "dirigible" in its present flabby condition. Rigidity was essential to control. It was, therefore, impossible to return home against the wind, even if he knew exactly where "home" lay. He could, of course, land any time by releasing a little more gas, but a man in dressing gown and pink pajamas hesitates to drop in among perfect strangers. An isolated farmhouse, where he might borrow a hat and a pair of overalls without having to explain to too many people, would be the most desirable landing place.

Meanwhile, more trouble loomed ahead; he was floating low and approaching a town. It was hardly possible that he could get through without bumping into something, and a quick shift from the car to some more stable support might be necessary. Wherefore, it seemed desirable to discard the hampering dressing gown.

The wisdom of this precaution was demonstrated a few minutes later, for he collided gently with the side of a house and bumped along it until he reached a small balcony. He caught and clung to the railing of that until he could make the car fast to it. Then he clambered out. The wind was so light that the air ship hardly struggled for release.

"Perhaps," he reasoned, "there's a chance for some clothes here. It's worth trying, anyhow. I hope nobody shoots before I have a chance to explain."

He pushed aside the shade and looked into the room.

"No place for me," he decided quickly. "Plenty of clothing, but not my kind."

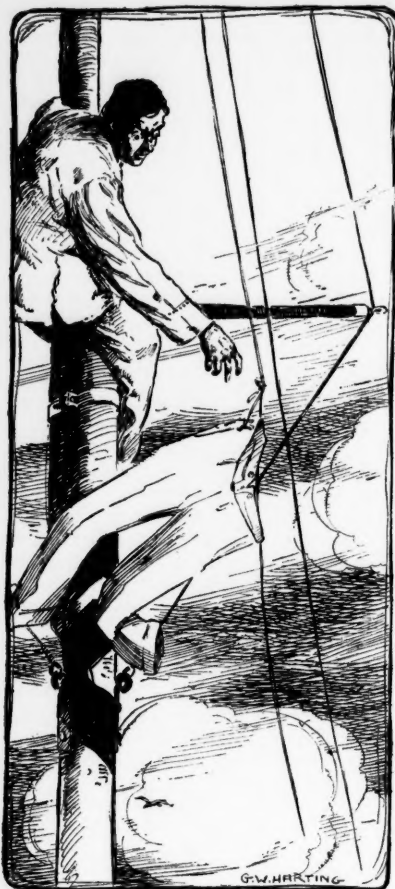
The occupant of the bed he saw only indistinctly, but there was nothing indistinct about the scream that greeted him. Here was trouble—real trouble. A man with a gun would represent a mere pleasing diversion by comparison. How could he justify his appearance at a girl's window in pink pajamas? How could he explain that he merely wished to borrow a pair of trousers and a coat?

He backed away hastily, clambered into the car, released it, and, fortunately, the erratic breeze now carried him clear of the house. There was, however, the flagpole in the public square to make further trouble for him. A man might try a million times to hit a flagpole with a balloon, and never succeed, but Jetson, who was not trying, quickly saw that he was going to hit this one. Just what would happen to the air ship was a matter of doubt; it might easily be punctured by a nail or a splinter. Therefore, it behooved him to be ready for a quick transfer from car to pole, and such transfer was likely to be difficult. The gas chamber, being longer and broader than the car, would hold the latter off.

Fortunately, however, the car proved to be just on a level with the crosstree, and the crosstree projected far enough for him to reach it. He first tried to push himself clear, but the wobbly air ship seemed disposed to break its ribs on the pole, and the pole looked safer than the car in such circumstances. Therefore, he transferred his precious person to the crosstree, whereupon the air ship unexpectedly released itself and floated away.

Here, at last, was a really serious situation. In pajamas on a flagpole! He had thought his predicament serious before, but it was nothing compared with this.

No one was visible when he gained his perch, but a night watchman soon discovered him, and a few minutes later people were flocking to the square from all directions. They were much excited, gesticulating and shouting at him continuously. He made out that they were advising him to come down. There were, however, many women in the crowd, and the circumstances made him somewhat averse to the society of ladies. He sadly realized, too, the impracticability, if not impossibility, of bringing an air ship close enough to take him off, even if one were available. So he merely beseeched them to provide raiment, but they did not seem to understand. Even the megaphone that was finally pro-



And then a pair of trousers fluttered gently in the breeze.

cured did not solve the problem, for it made only the least important end of the verbal exchange distinct.

"If you can't slide down the pole," shouted the man with the megaphone, "we'll pull a rope up to you by the flag halyard."

Jetson shook his head, and yelled: "First, pants!"

"Thinks he's a kid with his first pair of pants," commented one man.

"And pink ones, at that," added another.

"What are you doing there?" was the next question megaphoned up.

This seemed such a silly question that Jetson lost patience. "Roosting!" he roared back.

"Says he's a rooster," was the way it was interpreted below.

"How did you get there?" persisted the man with the megaphone.

"Walked," was the sarcastic reply.

"Crazy as a loon," the crowd decided.

"Why don't you come down?" demanded the man with the megaphone.

"I like the perch," answered Jetson disgustedly.

"Thinks he's a fish now," they interpreted; and, after a hasty consultation, they telephoned for a ladder long enough to reach him and also for asylum attendants to take him in charge when he was brought down.

Jetson, meanwhile, was mentally busy with his most perplexing problem, and he finally decided that the only solution lay in writing his message in blood. He prepared it, as already related, and—it went astray. He saw the crowd flock to the handkerchief that contained no message, while the small piece of linen that did floated beyond. It was maddening. He shouted to them to send up the megaphone; then demanded pencil and paper.

"Pencil! Pencil! Pencil!" he yelled. "Paper! Paper! Paper!"

And, at last, possibly because the fluttering handkerchief had suggested a message, they understood. Pencil and paper were attached to the flag halyard, and hauled up to him.

Even in this time of stress Jetson was mindful of his business and social obligations, and the first message he sent down was a telegram to one of the men with whom he had an engagement for that morning. It read:

Aéroplane trip postponed until to-morrow. Called away unexpectedly and unavoidably detained.

"Business engagement with a flag-pole," laughed the man who read this

message for the delectation of the crowd. "Is he crazy? Oh, no!"

Next came the following telegram for his man James:

Find out who cut the rope. Put detectives on the case immediately.

"Who cut the rope!" repeated the reader. "Say! Somebody else can climb the ladder to get him down. It don't look like a good job to me."

Then came this:

Have air ship ready to take me home. I'll be in a hurry when I come down.

"Sure he will," was the comment, "but we ain't providing air ships for lunatics."

The fourth, and last, message read:

Pants! Pants! Pants!

And the meaning of this pathetic cry now dawned upon the crowd.

"By thunder!" cried one. "He may be crazy, but he knows what he needs, all right, all right. If a pink man on a flagpole don't need pants, who does?"

Then it was discovered that relief, under feminine convoy, was already at hand.

V.

Jetson waited and watched in a fever of anxiety. Would they understand? And would they heed his instructions? Or were they all fools?

They seemed to be laughing over his messages, which was certainly not reassuring. No doubt the situation seemed humorous to them, but their previous excitement had not led him to expect them to make a joke of it. If they now insisted upon doing so—Jetson clinched his hands, and made frightful vows; he would break a few heads; he would go through that crowd like a battering-ram; he would — But what chance had a man in pink pajamas?

His thoughts were suddenly diverted to other channels by the appearance of a girl with a bundle. The horrible curse that he was about to launch on the crowd below died away on his lips. He leaned over, and stared. Could it be Miss Anita Coakley? Was it possible that Fate would play him so

scurvy a trick? If there was one person in all the world before whom he would not want to appear in such humiliating plight, it was Miss Coakley. If there was one person to whom he wished to seem a sane, respectable, and dignified mortal, it was Miss Coakley. And yet, there could be no doubt that she was the girl with the bundle.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned dismally.

Miss Coakley had reached the crowd at the foot of the pole, and she was, apparently, explaining something, although she seemed to be rather diffident about it. Finally, she surrendered her bundle to the town marshal and withdrew from the centre of activity. She did not look up, for which he was grateful. If she had, it would have been very, very awkward, for there is no rule of etiquette that tells how a pink man on a flagpole should greet a feminine friend below.

A cheer from the crowd reached him, and then a pair of trousers fluttered gently in the breeze as they were drawn up on the flag halyard. They were of white duck. An outing shirt followed, and even socks and canvas outing shoes were not forgotten. It was evident that Miss Coakley wished him to make himself as presentable as the circumstances would permit before she was called upon to recognize him.

Just how he got trousers and shirt on over his pajamas he was never afterward able to explain. The feat called for gymnastic ability of high order. The crowd below was interested and enthusiastic, cheering wildly as his toilet progressed, but he never could remember much beyond the passionate way he embraced the pole from time to time. He did, however, succeed in arraying himself for the descent. Then a stout rope was pulled up to him, and, having made it fast, he slid to the ground with only slight damage to his hands.

The marshal grabbed him the moment he was within reach, and the marshal had several volunteer assistants. This was annoying. It was even more annoying to have a score of people shouting: "Hang on to

him!" "Don't let him go!" "Tie him up!" "Where are those asylum guards?" etc. It had been his purpose to say a few words to them about their stupidity, but he had no chance. He had intended to see to those neglected telegrams immediately, but he found himself otherwise occupied. In truth, he found himself overpowered before he knew what was happening.

"We'll lock him up till the asylum men come," said the marshal.

Then Jetson understood that he was considered crazy, and he tried to explain the situation, but no one heeded him. He told how his air ship had floated away, but they ignored him. The marshal and his volunteer assistants clung to him desperately, and his struggles and protestations only made matters worse. The marshal decided that he didn't want the custody of such a lunatic for even a short time.

"Git a wagon," he ordered, "and we'll take him to the asylum ourselves. Six of us kin sit on him, while one drives."

There was, however, an unexpected interruption. Anita Coakley had kept modestly in the background, watching, listening, and hoping that the complications would not prove serious, but this was more than she could stand. Fortunately, she was a girl of some resourcefulness.

"One moment," she interposed, quickly confronting the marshal. "You forget that the clothes are mine."

"They don't look like it," retorted the marshal.

"I mean," she explained, blushing, "I furnished them. They are my brother's. But what right have you to take them away?"

The marshal scratched his head in perplexity. "Why—why, we can't do nothin' else," he argued. "We got this crazy man arrested—"

"I'm not crazy," Jetson broke in. "Miss Coakley, you know I'm not crazy, although you find me in a strange and humiliating situation. One of my air ships slipped its moorings unexpectedly."

Miss Coakley nodded, but her words

were still for the marshal. "Is the clothing I furnished under arrest, too?" she demanded sarcastically.

The marshal's perplexity increased. His duty, so far as his prisoner was concerned, seemed clear, but the clothing presented a problem unprecedented in his experience. Furthermore, the Coakleys were influential, and Miss Coakley especially was not one to be offended with impunity.

"To take that clothing away in the face of my protest," she went on, "will be theft—highway robbery."

"That's right," acquiesced one or two in the crowd.

"But," complained the marshal, "I can't take him without it. Why, say! Without them clothes that you provided, he'd look like a pink Chinyman with loose pants and his shirt hangin' out. I guess you didn't git a good look at him up on the pole, Miss Coakley."

She blushed again, but held steadfastly to her point. "Then," she said, "why take him at all?"

"What kin I do with him?" demanded the marshal.

"Why, he goes with the clothes just now," she answered.

"Oh, I say," broke in Jetson consolately. "I'm no prize package!"

"He's crazy," objected the marshal. "I couldn't turn him over to you."

"What else can you do?" she queried. The marshal didn't know. "Send a guard with him, if you like," she went on, "but he looks harmless to me."

Jetson groaned. To be thus calmly characterized as a harmless lunatic—and by her—was enough to make a man groan.

"Father may know him," she added. "I think it likely he will." Then to Jetson: "Come!"

She took him by the hand and led him away, the volunteer guards releasing him without protest.

The marshal followed, first, however, requesting some of the men to remain within call. The marshal was taking no chances. Feminine influence, he knew, was often soothing to the men—

tally afflicted, and it was quite possible that she could manage him better than a man, but it was just as well to have men within call. It would not be for long, anyway, as asylum attendants must be already on the way.

VI.

Mr. Coakley was dressing when they reached the house. He had slept through all the excitement, and was even now ignorant of the fact that the town had been mightily stirred by the antics of a pink man on a flagpole. So he was dressing in his usual leisurely fashion. Mrs. Coakley was away.

"We'll wait here for father," said Anita Coakley, after the maid she summoned had informed her that Mr. Coakley was "up but not down" yet.

Jetson gave her a look of plaintive appeal; then he glanced at his decidedly informal attire.

"Can't help it," she laughed. "You'll have to see him just as you are. Perhaps you can find a more suitable and complete outfit in Jack's room later; but the marshal won't be willing to let you out of his sight until father tells him it's all right. Meanwhile let's be comfortable."

She dropped into a big porch chair, and he drew up another. The marshal discreetly sought a seat at the other end of the porch. The crowd lingered expectantly in the street.

"Anyhow," said Jetson, finding much satisfaction in the thought, "*you* know it's all right."

"Do I?" she queried.

"Don't you?" he demanded.

"Look at it yourself," she parried. "Is roosting on a flagpole the diversion of a normal man? Have you not carried unconventionality to a shocking extreme? Can it be explained as mere eccentricity?"

"That's unkind," he declared. "You're making game of me."

"Am I?"

"Of course; and I know it's all absurd enough to tempt ridicule, but I don't like it. You know how it happened."

"I heard you trying to explain to the marshal."

"And you believed me, or you wouldn't expect your father to tell the marshal it's all right."

"How do you know I expect father to tell him that?"

"You said so."

"Oh, no." She had the tolerant air of one explaining to a child. "I merely said the marshal wouldn't be willing to let you out of his sight unless father did assure him it was all right. But you'll have to convince father first, of course."

Jetson glanced again, despairingly, at his incomplete and inappropriate costume. "And you?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't count," she replied. "The marshal wouldn't place any reliance upon my judgment in a case like this."

Jetson detected the note of raillery, but the situation seemed to him too serious for flippant treatment. "*Do* you think I'm crazy?" he demanded.

Still she parried. "I don't seem to be afraid of you, do I?" she asked.

"No."

She glanced at him quizzically, saw how troubled he was, and relented. "Well," she said, "I'm dreadfully afraid of crazy people."

He sighed his relief. "Then it's all right," he declared, "and I don't care what the rest of the world thinks."

"You'd better," she advised. "I can't do much for you if the rest of the world thinks you're crazy."

"Oh, let's drop that subject," he pleaded. "You know that I'm just as sane as—as—"

"As you look," she prompted.

"Please be serious," he implored. "I was coming to see you, anyway, because—"

"You came," she interrupted, "but you shouldn't have started so impulsively."

"I was coming to see you," he repeated, "because—"

"It is possible to be too informal," she suggested.

"It did look sort of informal at the window," he remarked, and this

change of base was so unexpected that it left her blushing and speechless. The advantage, for the first time, was with him. "Now, will you let me say it?" he demanded.

"Say what?" she asked demurely.

"What I wanted to say to you at the beach a few weeks ago."

"Why didn't you say it?"

"I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?"

"Of what your answer would be."

With the question of his sanity settled, just one idea was dominant in his mind, and he was satisfied now that he had led up to his point cleverly. One of his hands was reaching for one of hers, his eyes were seeking hers, and there was a suggestion of intimate and anxious appeal in his whole attitude.

"I was afraid at the beach," he said again, "but I had already determined to tell it to you here."

She looked up quickly. "Are you braver *en dishabille* than otherwise?"

The hand that was stealing toward hers was hastily withdrawn. Resentment and exasperation blazed red in his face for a moment; then the lines of determination settled about his mouth. "You *must* listen," he declared. "I'm desperate!"

"You look it," she assured him.

"You know what I want to say," he insisted.

"Do I?"

"And I'm going to say it."

"The marshal is looking."

"Hang the marshal!"

"And you're not dressed for the part. Think how ridiculous you'd look on your knees!"

"So you *do* know what I want to say."

"He'd lock you up, sure," she persisted.

"Just the same"—and he now possessed himself of her hand—"I'm going to say——"

"Here's father!"

"Oh, thunder!"

"Father," she called, "come here and see what I found on the flagpole."

Mr. Coakley was a man of dignity and poise, too well-bred to show the surprise he must have felt when his eyes rested upon Jetson. He advanced and shook hands with imperturbable courtesy, just as if it were a commonplace thing for a half-dressed young man to drop in before breakfast. Then he turned to his daughter.

"What did you find on the flagpole?" he asked.

"That," she answered mischievously, pointing to Jetson.

Mr. Coakley looked again, and smiled. Jetson had been a man of such immaculate attire on the few occasions that he had seen him that the contrast was striking.

"I don't quite understand," he said. "You found him on a flagpole?"

"Yes. He was marooned there, and I rescued him. I suppose he's mine."

"Er—er—what?"

"I saw him first, you know."

Mr. Coakley, who was accustomed to his daughter's vagaries, quickly recovered his mental poise, and smiled again at the young man's discomfiture. "And what are you going to do with him?" he asked.

"Oh," she answered carelessly, "I thought I'd marry him."

Mr. Coakley let his eyes wander from his daughter to Jetson, and then back to his daughter again. In spite of her tone of raillery, she was blushing, and his expression was one of rapturous surprise.

"Jetson," said Mr. Coakley, "if she has made up her mind to marry you, she'll do it."

"I hope she will," returned Jetson fervently, as he reached for her.

"The marshal!" she warned.

But the marshal was down in the road, driving the crowd away. "It's all right," he was saying. "Anybody that Coakley stands for kin roost where he likes."

Besides, the finding of a wrecked dirigible a few miles away had just been reported, and this was corroborative evidence of the truth of Jetson's story.

FACING HIS FATE



Emma Lee Walton

THE young man lifted the tent flap and went in, letting it fall behind to shut out the crowd awaiting their turn. He stood a moment looking at the girl in the gypsy costume and laughed softly.

"I've come to have my fortune told," he said. "Not, of course, on my own account, but merely to help raise the church mortgage."

"If the signore will be pleased to sit himself down, I shall do my best," she said softly. "*Tutti e due*, both hands if you please, palms up."

"Don't you have to hold 'em?"

"It isn't necessary."

He sighed, but she was studying his palms and gave no heed.

"Don't go and say that line's a journey," he protested. "It shows a deep disappointment. That's where I cut myself mending your hat pin and you laughed at me. That's all the sympathy I got. And I did it entirely to get sympathy."

"The signore mistakes. I am Zingarella, the gypsy. I know no person

to-night," she said. "Your life line is excellent."

"You ought to know. You can make or mar it. That's why I come to you for my fortune."

"I read what is there. You have been ill once upon a time."

"I guess that's that yachting trip of Pearson's. I never left the cabin for a single minute."

"Though you have traveled much, you are still to make your bed in many countries, and where you hang your hat there will be your home."

"Sounds like a tramp," he laughed.

"You incline to be impulsive in a small matter, and rush in where you are not expected, and yet in matters of importance you are not bold enough."

"If I thought you really believed that, Polly, I'd——" He leaned across the small table, but she checked him with a haughty tilt of her head.

"*Sono Zingarella la zingara*. I am reading your palm, signore. There are two girls in your hand, two, who are——"

"Two! I guess you're seeing double. There's never been any one but you, and you know it."

"What I know, I know; it is written in your hands. Two girls."

Her head drooped, and he saw only the top of her fantastic headdress.

"Who the dickens! Could it be the little Miller girl I knew at college? Look and see if she was dark with a turn-up nose."

"Palms know not individuals. I see one——"

"Well, say, do you know, she was a perfect bunch of fascinations then, and I wish you could see her now! I was all of nineteen, and she must have been thirty-two. Jove, but she's the limit, now! I guess she's the one. I was certainly hard hit for at least six months. How she did laugh when I told her so! I was glad she wouldn't marry me when she laughed."

"This does not interest me; tell me no more."

"Yes, it does," he laughed. "You're glad to hear it. That's all there is to it, anyhow. She was the first."

She shook her head solemnly.

"If you loved her, yes. The other time is later, and——"

He interrupted eagerly. "Say, do I marry her, or she marry me, or whichever way it goes?"

"It is so fated."

He heaved a sigh of relief. "All right. Go ahead with the rest of the dope."

"You will have a disappointment."

"Look here! Don't I get good luck for a dollar? Where do I get stung?"

"In money. But somewhere around your thirtieth year your fortunes will take a turn, and great happiness will come to you."

"Is somebody going to marry me for my money?" he asked gloomily. "I'm thirty, now, you know; and I don't see anything very joyful coming my way."

She gazed thoughtfully at his hand.

"If you cared to exert yourself, you could be a person of prominence and power," she said. "But you lack ambition."

"Lazy, eh?"

"There is a future influence in your palm that will help you to great things."

"There, now! There's your chance!" he cried. "Rescue the perishing. Use your influence in the right direction."

She considered the palms carefully through her magnifying glass. "You are conceited," she said slowly. "Rather inclined to indolence, and a severe critic."

"I'll bet you couldn't see all that with the naked eye," he said. "You wouldn't have to use that glass to see my virtues."

"You're very extravagant."

He cocked his head on one side. "You certainly wouldn't have anything to find out about my character," he said. "Forewarned is forearmed."

"You notice everything," she went on, unmoved. "Little things annoy you."

"I wouldn't scold if the biscuits were burned," he said. "I never eat biscuits, anyhow."

"All your lines go up, and are therefore happy ones," she went on. "You must look out for a small accident on a journey——"

"There!" he cried dismally. "Just think how it will be if I am condemned to a life of loneliness by you! I go off on a journey all alone, all by myself, and am almost killed, with no one near to help or comfort me. Are you going to be so cruel?"

"You need not take the journey. You forget, signore. I am Zingarella——"

He seized her hands in both his, but did not take his eyes from her flushed face.

"No, you're not!" he exclaimed softly. "You're Polly, and I don't care whether you like it or not; I'm going to tell your fortune and tell it right."

"You mustn't," she protested feebly. "There are people waiting."

"The people be hanged!" he cried fiercely. "Here's another dollar, so nobody can say I cheated the church. Now, listen," he went on rapidly. "You're going to be married in a few months, and you're going to marry me."

Understand? I'm tired of shilly-shallying, and I hereby issue my ultimatum. I've loved you too long to be put off any more."

"You never said so before."

"Said so!" he cried. "Did I have to tell you? If you didn't know it, you're the only one who didn't. And now, Polly, I don't care what you say——"

"Oh, don't you?"

"I don't mean that. But I know this much—you're going to marry me, you can't help yourself. You've got to."

She rose, and put out her hand to open the tent flap for her next patron.

"I should also have said," she re-

marked carelessly, "that you are too masterful to succeed always."

His face grew suddenly white and drawn.

"Polly!" he cried sharply. "You do love me, don't you? Couldn't you learn if you don't? Polly, don't say no!"

Her face dimpled into a smile.

"How could I?" she asked softly.

"Am I not the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter? Can I not read my own palm? I am Zingarella."

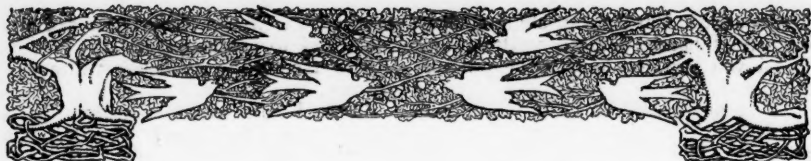
Then, before he could move or make reply, she threw open the tent flap with a quick, graceful gesture, and admitted the waiting patron.



In the Gray Years

WHEN Old Age comes to make my eyes less bright,
To take my arm and lead me down his ways,
Where dust and ashes soft, of other days,
Make dull and chill the world—my hair snow-white—
Embittered shall I be because the Night
Lies just beyond the gray autumnal haze?
Shall carmine poppies then have ceased to blaze?
Shall I forego all joy, all laughter light?
O heart of mine, keep red throughout thy years!
Live every little sweet each day shall bring!
Shall there not come white, blossom-fragrance May,
And wistful April's yearnings, poutings, tears?
And 'cross the fields the meadow-lark shall sing!
O heart of mine, oh, turn not, turn not gray!

FLORENCE CALNON.



The Lower Life

By May Kendall

IT might seem matter for regret
That Evolution has not yet
Fulfilled our wishes.
The birds soar higher far than we,
The fish outswim us in the sea,
The simple fishes.

But, evolutionists reflect,
We have the pull in intellect,
And that's undoubted;
Yet still we cry: "Can this atone
For fins or pinions of our own,
Not to be scouted?"

We hold that Evolution's plan,
To give as little as she can,
Is sometimes trying.
Fair share of brains, indeed, we win;
But why not throw the swimming in,
Why not the flying?

But, ah, she gives not more or less.
We pay for all that we possess,
We weep and waver,
While Evolution, still the same,
With knights or pawns pursues the
game,
And shows no favor.

As onward yet life's currents roll,
The gaining of a higher goal
Increaseth sorrow;
And what we win at its own cost
We win; and what we lose is lost,
Nor can we borrow.

If we have freedom, we lose peace.
If self-renunciation, cease
To care for pleasure.
If we have Truth—important prize!
We wholly must away with lies,
Or in a measure.

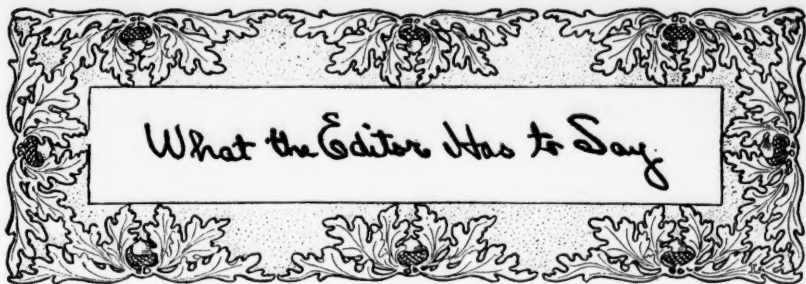
Is wisdom, then, the only test,
Of lot superlatively blest?
There have been others.
Our æon, too, will pass, and then
Are monads so much less than men?
Alas, my brothers!

This higher life is curious stuff,
Too high, yet not quite high enough,
A mingled vial!
This higher life is sold too dear—
Would I could give a lower sphere
An equal trial!

Ah, could I be a fish, indeed,
Of lucky horoscope, and creed
Utilitarian,
'Mong blissful waves to glide or
rest,
I'd choose the lot I doubt the best,
Or fish or Aryan!

Or could I be a bird, and fly
Through forests all unhaunted by
The shooting season,
I'd tell you which I voted for,
The flight of airy pinions, or
The March of Reason!





What the Editor Has to Say

HAVE you very many friends, and do some of them, even the most esteemed, ever bore you? We are confident that the answer is "Yes" to both questions. The girl in the next room may drift into your room just when you want to go to bed or write a letter. And then may be the time when *she* wants to talk, and she does talk. At the breakfast table or at dinner, she may be delightfully interesting, but now you are conscious of the weariness of life, you realize how hard it is to be interested looking, and how difficult an act of simulation it is to stifle a yawn. If you happen to be a man, you probably have had similar experiences. If you keep house, you must have known times when a proper exhibition of hospitality was an altogether difficult duty, and when to tell some one you really cared for that he or she was always welcome and mustn't hurry away so soon, has seemed the hollowest of insincerities.

IF you could only turn them on and off when you wanted! If you could bid them come forth and talk when you were lonely! And if only you could firmly, but politely, bid them vanish when the humor took you! You have friends of this kind—unobtrusive, ever ready when you call for them, always subsiding at the right time. They are generally a great deal more interesting and quite as real, when you come to think of it, as the other kind. If you have a shelf of books, or a few magazines, in the room, it can never

be lonely. You can call forth your favorite character in Dickens; you can plunge headlong into a violent love affair with "The Prisoner of Zenda"; you can listen to what Thackeray has to say about society people, or go to a tournament with "Ivanhoe," or look out into the night at Elsinore with "Hamlet." All manner of human experiences, solemn and delightful, are yours for the stretching forth of your hand, all sorts and conditions of grave and merry company.

WE have a lot of interesting people to interest you in next month's SMITH'S. There's the enterprising and energetic young lady who went to Florida to run an orange grove. The frost came upon the grove, and there were no oranges, so the girl started a photographic studio instead, and took, among other pictures, a particularly poor one of an interesting, but lazy, Englishman. There's a complete novel about this girl, "A Florida Freeze," by Susie Bouchelle Wight, in next month's issue. She won't bore you for a minute. You can say good-bye to her at any time, but you won't do it till you turn the last page, and you will do it then with genuine regret.

THEN there is Captain Sproul and others equally ridiculous in Holman F. Day's story, "A Starry Night for a Ramble." We read a great many stories every week, but we don't know any author who can send more

ripples of uproarious mirth through the medium of type than Mr. Day. If you want to read something different, please turn then to the story, "As a Dream When One Awaketh," by Virginia Middleton. You must have read a good deal of Miss Middleton's work by this time, and you know, perhaps, a little better than we can tell you just how good, how vital in its realism, how compelling in its interest, it really is. This is one of the strongest, most stirring, stories you have ever read. It is a story of self-sacrifice on the part of a woman, and it's going to make you think a good deal after you have closed the magazine and laid it aside.

IT is harder than one might think to get good short stories. There are thousands writing them all the time. The occupation is open to any one who can read and write. The material for the stories is all around you, but those who can see the best things and make others see them are very few in proportion. Some stories are easy to write. It's easy to get a central figure, man or woman, to suit you; not difficult to construct a set of imaginary circumstances and put your hero in the midst of them. There are many things harder than to work out a fairly successful plot. It's harder to plan a good game of chess, for instance. The trouble with so many of the stories is that it isn't so easy to read them. We work hard and earnestly to get the real stories, tales whose characters live for us, that have feeling and the stir of human emotion in them. Sometimes we succeed beyond our expectations, and this is one of the times. You may see some evidences of what we mean in the present issue, but you'll know a lot more about it when you open the issue of SMITH'S that comes out a month from now. Don't forget to read "The Major's Satsuma Jag," by C. C. Leybee. The major has his faults; he's rather stingy, for one thing, and a little too self-indulgent, for another. But before the end of the story you'll come to like him a little, and know him

as well as if he had lived across the street from you for ten years. We don't know how you get to like him. He does nothing commendable, and he does some things that he should not do. At the same time, his misfortunes are so funny for the onlooker and so hard on the major, that he gets to be as attractive as the clown in the circus. Then, too, at the end the major meets a very unpleasant situation with some diplomacy, philosophy and good grace. Read the story, and see if you don't want to pass it along to your friends.

YOU don't have to sit in a stiff-backed pew when Charles Battell Loomis preaches. You don't have to rise for the hymns, because there aren't any, and no one will notice it if you go to sleep in the midst of the service. But you won't fall asleep. Next month he instructs us on "How Not to Become a Millionaire." We had thought that the most of us, even now, in U. S. A., had already acquired a certain mastery of this abstruse and difficult art, but it seems that Loomis knows more about it than any one has ever hitherto discovered. He may have had a narrow escape himself, and determined to take no more chances. Anyway, he'll tell you all about it.

WHEN we start to make up a number, we always lay out about three times as much material as will fill the magazine. Then we start in to find the best of the stories and the selection that will give the greatest possible variety and balance to the number. The table of contents for May is as interesting as any that we have ever had before us. Temple Bailey, Anne O'Hagan, Owen Oliver, Maude Zella Herrick, Harriet Morse McAuley, and a good many others have helped to make it. There are funny stories and stories that have tears in them. There are others in which tears and laughter are well commingled. There isn't a story in the number that hasn't something distinctively appealing in it.



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I had another Face
to shave"**

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It's Clean.

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(Signed) FRANK B. GALLIVAN, Ph.D.

(Reports of other eminent chemists sent on request)



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How he operates four factories—employs 4,000 men—ships 30 carloads of automobiles per day—to supply the call for Overlands.

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Get the Whole Story

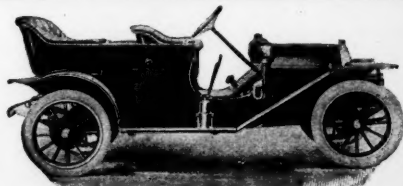
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Please send me the book.

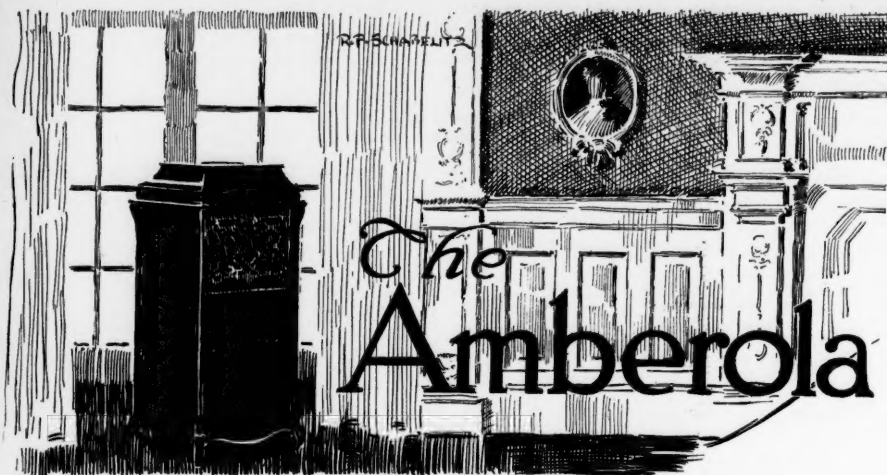
The
Overland
Made in
Six Styles of Body

(8)



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XUM



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Here is a dish that everyone likes—a food as hearty as meat—a meal that would take you 16 hours to prepare.

A dish that remains fresh and savory. It can be served hot or cold. The best meal of the kind that a chef ever prepared.

And your grocer supplies it—ready to serve in a minute—at about the cost of home-baked beans. Think what it means—in a hundred emergencies—to have a few cans of Van Camp's on the shelf.

And Van Camp's are baked in steam ovens. Not crisped, not broken—always nut-like, mealy and whole.

They don't ferment and form gas, as do home-baked beans, because the fierce heat has made them digestible.

The tomato sauce is baked into the beans, giving a delicious blend.

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So Van Camp's are more than convenient.

The National Dish

Van Camp's

PORK AND BEANS

BAKED
WITH TOMATO
SAUCE

The National Dish

Van Camp's, as you know, outsell all other brands. And these are the principal reasons:

We use only the choicest Michigan beans—the whitest and plumpest. They cost us four times what some beans would cost.

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And our sauce costs five times what common sauce sells for.

This dish is our pride—the final result of 48 years' experience. Just compare Van Camp's with another brand, and see what our methods mean.

(39)

Three sizes: 10, 15 and 20 cents per can

Van Camp Packing Company, Established 1861 Indianapolis, Ind.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

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All-wool
fabrics.
The
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Six months
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This is the largest concern of its kind in America. Tens of thousands of men have charge accounts here. They have garments sent on approval without any advance payment. When perfectly satisfied, they remit a little each month.

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Our prices are amazingly low, because we deal direct. Cash tailoring houses, dealing through agents, must charge at least 50% more. We have no agents, so we give you the agent's commission.

We invite you to send for our style book, also for samples of all our spring fabrics. We will also send you a tape line with instructions for taking your measurements. This will take but five minutes, and will save you from \$8 to \$15 per suit. We guarantee to fit you as perfectly as though you came to our shop.

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You will never buy elsewhere when you learn how pleasant and cheap it is to buy in this way.

STYLES AND SAMPLES FREE

Write us today—a postal will do—and we will send you plates of all the new styles, samples of all the new fabrics, tape line and everything. Just learn, for your own sake, what our methods mean. Don't wait, for our spring line is complete now. Cut out this ad so you won't forget. (6)

THE CLEMENT CO.

551 Franklin St.

CHICAGO, ILL.



We Trust You 10 Days
\$1.85 Each

Send no money, write today for this handsome 14-inch, beautifully curled, carefully selected Ostrich Feather, any color. If you find it a big bargain, remit \$1.85 each, or sell 2 feathers and get your own free. Enclose 6c. postage. Write for catalogue.

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Boston Garters are made of best materials in a clean factory, by well-paid help.

Every pair warranted—penalty, a new pair or your money back.

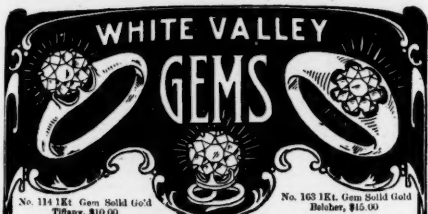


BOSTON GARTERS
RECOGNIZED THE
STANDARD, AND
WORN THE WORLD
OVER BY WELL
DRESSED MEN.

Sample Pair, Cotton, 25c. Silk, 50c.
Mailed on Receipt of Price.

GEORGE FROST CO. MAKERS
BOSTON, MASS., U.S.A.

See that BOSTON GARTER
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No. 114 1Kt. Gem Solid Gold
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SEE THEM BEFORE PAYING
These Gems are Chemical White Sapphires and can't be told from diamonds except by an expert. So hard they can't be filed, so will wear forever and retain brilliancy. We want you to see these gems—we will pay all expenses for you to see them.

OUR PROPOSITION—We will send you either rings or stud illustrated—by express C. O. D. all charges prepaid—with privilege of examination. If you like it, pay the expressman—if you don't, return it to him and it won't cost you a cent. Fair proposition, isn't it? All mounted in solid gold, diamond mountings. **Send for Booklet.**

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Salary Increases

Voluntarily Reported Every Month

If one thing more than another proves the ability of the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton to raise the salaries of poorly-paid but ambitious men and women—to raise **YOUR** salary—it is the monthly average of 300 letters **VOLUNTARILY** written by students telling of salaries raised and positions bettered through I. C. S. help.

YOU don't live so far away that the I. C. S. cannot reach you. Provided you can read and write your schooling has not been so restricted that the I. C. S. cannot help you. Your occupation isn't such that the I. C. S. cannot improve it. Your spare time isn't so limited that it cannot be used in acquiring an I. C. S. training. Your means are not so slender that you cannot afford it. The occupation of your choice is not so high that the I. C. S. cannot train you to fill it. *Your salary is not so great that the I. C. S. cannot raise it.* To learn how easily it can be done, mark the attached coupon.

A Salary Increase For You

Add to the three hundred students heard from every month, the other successful students not heard from, and you have some idea of the tremendous salary-raising power of the I. C. S. During January the number of students who reported success was 426. Mark the coupon.

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**Mark It
N-O-W!**

SALARY-RAISING COUPON

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box, 599 Scranton, Pa.

Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I have marked X.

Bookkeeper	Mechan'l Draftsman
Stenographer	Telephone Engineer
Advertisement Writer	Elec. Lighting Supt.
Show Card Writer	Mechan. Engineer
Window Trimmer	Pumper & Steam Fitter
Commercial Law	Stationary Engineer
Illustrator	Civil Engineer
Drafter & Craftsman	Build'g Contractor
Oil & Service	Architect's Draftsman
Chemist	Architect
Textile Mill Supt.	Structural Engineer
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Name _____

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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



It is when used for the baby's sensitive skin that its great fineness, fluffy softness, its snowy whiteness and soothing, antiseptic qualities show the superiority of

Williams' Talc Powder

These same qualities also make it best for the mother's toilet and for the man who shaves.

Two odors, Violet and Carnation.



Ask your dealer for Williams' Toilet Soaps, Jersey Cream, Violet, Lilac, Heliotrope, Carnation, etc.

Address The J. B. Williams Co., Dept. A, Glastonbury, Conn.

LIBERAL SAMPLE OFFER

Send 4 cents in stamps and let us mail you a sample and show you its incomparable features. State whether Violet or Carnation is wanted.

NEW INVENTION!

FOR THE HOME Air Now Does All the Work

Cleans Carpets, Rugs, Matting, etc. on the floor, by the Vacuum Process

The Home Vacuum Cleaner

WEIGHS FOUR POUNDS



\$6.00

Not sold in stores

Operated by child or weakly woman. Air is drawn through body and fibre of carpet at terrific speed. Carries all dust, dirt, grit, germs, etc. Into the Cleaner. No dust in room, it all goes into Cleaner. Super-sues brim, brush, sweeper, dust pan and dust cloth. **Cleans, Sweeps and Dusts in one operation.** Keeps house clean, away with house-cleaning. Portable, dustless, always ready. Adapted to every home—rich or poor—city, village or country. Does same work as expensive machines. Costs nothing to operate—should last a lifetime. Saves time, labor, carpets, curtains, furniture. Saves drudgery, **saves health, saves money.** Saves taking up and beating carpets. The Home Cleaner truly a wonder. Astonishes everybody; customers all delighted and praise it. They wonder how they ever did without it.

Lady had matting too old to take up—Home Cleaner saved it—Cleaned it on floor.

Others write: "Would not do without it for many times its cost." Another says: "Ten year old girl keeps everything clean." Another: "Never had house so clean." Another: "Carpets and rugs so clean baby can play without getting dust and germs." Another: "It works so easy; just slide nozzle over carpet, it draws all the dirt into the Cleaner—not a particle of dust raised." So they run, hundreds and thousands of letters praising, without a complaint. To try a Home Cleaner means to want it—then keep it. The size is right—weight is right—price is right. Simple, neat, handsome, durable and easily operated. All put together ready for use when you receive it.

SENT ANYWHERE FOR ONLY \$6

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Every one tested before shipping—guaranteed as represented or money refunded. Write today; or better, send order. You won't regret it.

FREE SAMPLE TO ACTIVE AGENTS

Agents make money easy, quick, sure. Spare or all time. Men or women. Experience unnecessary. Woman made \$18.00 profit one evening. R. W. Wyant, Neb., says: "Cleared \$1,545.00 last month." M. Goodman, Kan., writes: "Made \$2,000.00 in four months." So it goes all along the line—These records are not uncommon. **Sales, easy, profits big, generous.** Show one in operation. People want it, must have it; when they see it they buy. How they sell! Show ten families, sell 8. Write today. Send postal card for full description and agents' plan. Name choice of territory. Act quick.

Address R. Armstrong Mfg. Co.

474 Alms Bldg.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Hair Like This is the Crown-Glory of Man or Woman



Is it yours? Are hair troubles overtaking you? If you are bald or near bald; when your hair is falling, faded or dying; when dandruff begins to get in its destructive work, get **Lorimer's Excelsior Hair Tonic**, the remarkable treatment the newspapers everywhere are telling about; the remedy that doctors are praising. Get it or order it; a reliable druggist—one who will not offer you a substitute, if you have never used it, by prepaid mail a trial supply of this remarkable

Lorimer's Excelsior FREE Hair Tonic let me send you hair food. Write today to **WM. CHAS. KEENE, Pres't, Lorimer Institute, Dept. 2508, Baltimore, Maryland.**

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

SHIPPED IN SECTIONS **BROOKS** FINISHED AT HOME FURNITURE GUARANTEED TO BE SATISFACTORY

Do You Know What Our Knock Down Furniture Is?

That it is easy to put together?
That it is shipped in sections, from factory to you?
That it is made of solid oak?
That it saves you over half?

Why? Because

You do not pay exorbitant freight charges;
You do not pay expensive crating charges;
You do not pay high finishing costs;
You do not pay jobber's profit;
You do not pay dealer's profit;
You pay but one profit only—our profit.

In fact, do you know that retail furniture dealers purchase our furniture—set it up—and sell it to you at a handsome profit?

Our best customer is the United States Government. We furnished one of the buildings at the Seattle-Yukon Exposition. We have just furnished a large new building for the State of South Dakota. These orders run up in the thousands—purchased at catalog prices. The point is, you can buy one piece, if desired, at exactly the same price and terms.

BROOKS MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 5804 Ship St., Saginaw, Mich., U. S. A.
Originators of the knock down system of home furnishing. Established 1901.

Send today—no tomorrow—for our **Catalog No. 10—it's free**

It best tells the story—explains in detail our proposition—which is to furnish you with the best arts and crafts furniture—at a cost that is ridiculously low.



Anyon receive it, with cushions made, ready to drop in place. Just attach joints to put together in the grooves provided.

Davenport No. 6—Height 35 inches—Depth 30 inches—Length 88 inches—Legs 3 inches square.

Ordinary Retail Price, \$50.00

Our Price, \$19.25

Can be assembled by any woman. No skill required; the only tool necessary is a screw driver, and the holes are bored. Each piece can go together but one way, and that is the right way.

Our Guarantee

You take no risk.—We absolutely guarantee that you will be satisfied with everything you purchase of us, or your money will be instantly refunded—can we make it stronger?

BROOKS MANUFACTURING COMPANY, 5804 Ship St., Saginaw, Mich., U. S. A.
Originators of the knock down system of home furnishing. Established 1901.

You Save over Half on **COME-PACKT** and it's Honest all Through



\$9.50 With Cushions

We sell direct only—factory to you—saving you all dealers' and jobbers' profits, expensive packing, and 8% freight. You put the finished sections together and apply your choice of seven stains (sent free). The result is handsome substantial furniture of the highest grade at less than half the cost of commonplace.

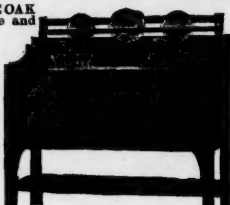
One Hundred other handsome pieces, in rich Quartered Oak from \$3 up.



\$10.25 Extends 6 ft.

QUARTER Sawn WHITE OAK—rich in beautiful flake and grain—is used throughout. You see just what you got—its Honest All Through.

Our Name and Guarantee back every piece—your money back any time you say. Try our way **ONCE**—that's the proof.



\$22.50 (A)

Write Today for beautiful Catalog Free **COME-PACKT FURNITURE CO., 410 Edwin St., Ann Arbor, Mich.**



For Liquor and Drug Using

A scientific remedy which has been skillfully and successfully administered by medical specialists for the past 30 years

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Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

THIRTEEN

Just Thirteen Good Things in the March Month-End Popular

A Complete Novel of the Northwest: "PINNACLE BOB," by **BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR.**

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ARSENE LUPIN

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THE MARCH MONTH-END POPULAR



MAX MARCIN

MAX MARCIN contributes a dramatic short story: "THE NOMINATION THAT WENT BEGGING."

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Remember

"The Hollow Needle"

Describing the latest exploits of

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BEGINS in this number

On Sale Everywhere.



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Are Known By the Necco Seal

The seal always appears on the box. With this as a guide you can't go wrong in buying confectionery of *known quality*—500 varieties to choose from—including, of course, the well-known LENOX CHOCOLATES.

The NECCO seal means confectionery that is machine-made and non-handled. Sold by all leading dealers.

NEW ENGLAND CONFECTIONERY CO.,

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YALE and SNELL BICYCLES

are the only ones fitted with the
"CONSOLIDATED" HANGER

Its true alignment makes them the easiest running bicycles in the world.



HUSSEY HANDLE BARS

are furnished on
all Men's models
—45 distinct positions possible.

Our factory—the
largest in the
United States—
has been building
bicycles of the
highest grade for
nearly a quarter
of a century, and

EXCLUSIVE "CONSOLIDATED" FEATURES

have kept these bicycles in the lead for years.

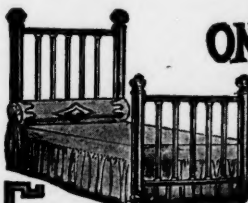
Write for (free) booklet describing 1910 models of Men's, Women's and Juvenile Yales and Snells. It also tells of the "Consolidated" Package Car, which has revolutionized delivery methods.

We build the famous Yale Motorcycles.

Don't buy till you have read our descriptive matter.

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ON SMALL MONTHLY PAYMENTS

BRASS BED Massive ALL-BRASS BED, large 2-inch posts, any width desired, heavy genuine French lacquer, guaranteed 10 years, in either bright or satin finish; most extraordinary value. **Terms \$2 cash, \$1 month**

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Everything for the home on Open Account Credit—the credit that is so much appreciated by the best families in Chicago today. This splendid credit service is now offered to you no matter where you live or what your salary or position may be. It's credit of the highest character—thoroughly dignified and pleasant—very convenient and helpful. You send a very small sum with order, we ship goods at once and you pay us as you find it convenient. You may take a year on every purchase. We charge absolutely nothing for this credit service—no interest—no extras of any kind. No security required. Absolute satisfaction or money back. Everything confidential.

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Hartman Furniture & Carpet Co.

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Largest, oldest and best known homefurnishing concern in America. Est. 1855—55 years of success—22 big stores—over 2,000,000 homes furnished—over 700,000 customers today—capital and resources larger than that of any similar concern in the country.



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We will ship you a

"RANGER" BICYCLE

proposed, to any place in the United States without a cent deposit in advance, and allow ten days free trial from the day you receive it. If it does not suit you in every way and is not all or more than we claim for it and a better bicycle than you can get anywhere else regardless of price, or if for any reason whatever you do not wish to keep it, ship it back to us at our expense for freight and you will not be out one cent.

LOW FACTORY PRICES

We sell the highest grade bicycles direct from factory to rider at lower prices than any other house. We save you \$10 to \$25 middlemen's profit on every bicycle. Highest grade models with Puncture-Proof tires, Imported Roller chains, pedals, etc., at prices no higher than cheap mail order bicycles; also reliable medium grade models at unheard of low prices.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED

In each town and district to ride and exhibit a sample 1910 "Ranger" Bicycle furnished by us. You will be astonished at the wonderful *fully low Prices* and the liberal propositions and special offer we will give on the first 1910 sample going to your town. Write at once for our *special offer*. **DO NOT BUY** a bicycle or a pair of tires from *anyone at any price* until you receive our catalogue and learn our low prices and liberal terms. **BICYCLE DEALERS**, you can sell our bicycles under your own name plate at double our prices. Orders filled the day received. **SECOND HAND BICYCLES**—a limited number taken in trade by our Chicago retail stores will be closed out at once, at \$3 to \$6 each. Descriptive bargain list mailed free.

TIRES, COASTER BRAKE rear wheels, inner tubes, lamps, cyclometers, parts, repairs and everything in the bicycle line at half usual prices. **DO NOT WAIT**, but write today for our *Large Catalogue* fully illustrated and containing a great fund of interesting matter and useful information. It only costs a postal to get everything.

Ignore beautifully illustrated and containing a great fund of interesting matter and useful information. It only costs a postal to get everything. Write it Now.

MEAD CYCLE CO. Dept. R-110 CHICAGO, ILL.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Mail Me This Free Coupon

with your name and address plainly written

Name.....

Address.....

You'll receive, prepaid, a \$1 pair of Drafts to try Free, as explained below. Magic Foot Draft Co., Dept. 436F, Jackson, Mich.

To every one suffering with

RHEUMATISM

I Make This Unlimited Offer



FREDERICK DYER, Corresponding Sec'y.

I'll send you the **Drafts** the same day I get your coupon—fresh from the laboratory, ready to begin their cure the minute you put them on. They are curing every stage and condition of this cruel disease, **whether chronic or acute—muscular, Sciatic, Lumbago or Gout**—no matter where located or how severe. They are curing old men and women who have suffered all their lives, as well as all the milder stages. Don't neglect rheumatism, I urge you, for I know the horrible torture and deformity it so often leads to. Send today for the **Drafts**. I send them on **free trial** because I **know** what they are doing for many thousands, and I have faith that they can cure you likewise. Try the **Drafts** when you get them.

Then, if you are fully satisfied with the benefit received, send me One Dollar. If not, they cost you nothing. **I take your word.** Address Magic Foot Draft Co., 436F Oliver Bldg., Jackson, Michigan. Send no money—just the coupon. Write today—**now**.



ME-GRIM-INE

FOR ALL FORMS OF HEADACHE AND NEURALGIA

Write for a Free Trial Box.

The DR. WHITEHALL NEGRIMINE CO.

(Sold by Druggists)

SOUTH BEND, IND.

ESTAB. 1889

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Eyeglasses Not Necessary

Eyesight Can Be Strengthened, and Most Forms of Diseased Eyes Successfully Treated Without Cutting or Drugging.

That the eyes can be strengthened so that eyeglasses can be dispensed with in many cases has been proven beyond a doubt by the testimony of hundreds of people who publicly claim that their eyesight has been restored by that wonderful little instrument called "Actina." "Actina" also relieves sore and granulated lids, iritis, etc., and removes cataracts without cutting or drugging. Over 75,000 "Actinas" have been sold, therefore "Actina" is not an experiment, but a reliable method of treatment.

"Actina" can be used by old and young with perfect safety. It is impossible to do harm with one. Every member of the family can use the one instrument for any form of disease of the Eye, Ear, Throat or Head. One will last for years, and is always ready for use. It will be sent on trial, postpaid. If you will send your name and address to the Actina Appliance Co., Dept. 306N, 811 Walnut Street, Kansas City, Mo., you will receive absolutely FREE, a valuable book—Professor Wilson's Treatise on Disease.



WE WILL TRUST YOU TEN DAYS \$1.50
Sent on Approval. Send No Money. **Hair Switch**
Send a lock of your hair and we will mail a 2 1/2 oz. 22-inch short stem fine human hair switch to match. If you find it a big bargain, remit \$1.50 in ten days, or sell it and **GET YOUR SWITCH FREE**. Extra shades a little more. Include postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade switches, pompadours, wigs, puffs, etc., etc. **Anna Ayers,** Dept 701 17 Quincy Street Chicago



Geisha Diamonds

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Bright, sparkling, beautiful. For brilliancy they equal the genuine, standing all test and puzzle experts. One twentieth the expense. Sent free with privilege of examination. For particulars, prices, etc., address

THE R. GREGG MFG. & IMPT. CO.

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THE UP-TO-DATE NAIL POLISH
NO GREASE—NO POWDER—NO DUFFING
POLISHES WHILE BEING APPLIED
10¢ & 25¢ AT DRUG STORES
AN ANALOGUE ON RECEIPT OF PRICE & STAMP
THE A. A. LUCAS CO. 103 E. 125th ST. N.Y.



Remoh Gems

Looks like a diamond—wears like a diamond—brilliancy guaranteed forever—stands filing like a diamond—stands heat like a diamond—has no paste, foil or artificial backing. Set only in solid gold mountings. 1-20th the cost of diamonds. A marvelous, reconstructed gem. Not an imitation. Sent on approval. Write for our catalog, it's free. No canvassers. **REMOH JEWELRY CO., 437 N. BROADWAY, ST. LOUIS.**

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1001 curious (mostly untold) facts about Human Nature? Read Dr. Foote's "Wonder" book on the delicate subjects of Love, Marriage, Parentage, Health, Disease, and Frenzy. It is the fruit of 50 years' experience of a successful author and practitioner. Full of advice necessary to every man and woman. Contains more vital facts than your doctor would give you for ten dollars. In 3 sections—240 pages and 10 ill's. **PRICE 10c.** **S. S. HILL BOOK CO., 139 E. 24th St., New York City**

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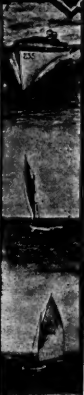
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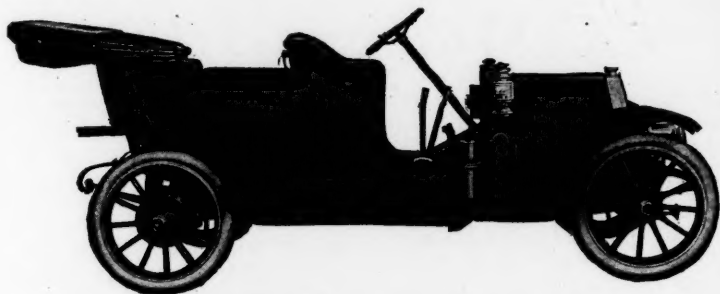
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